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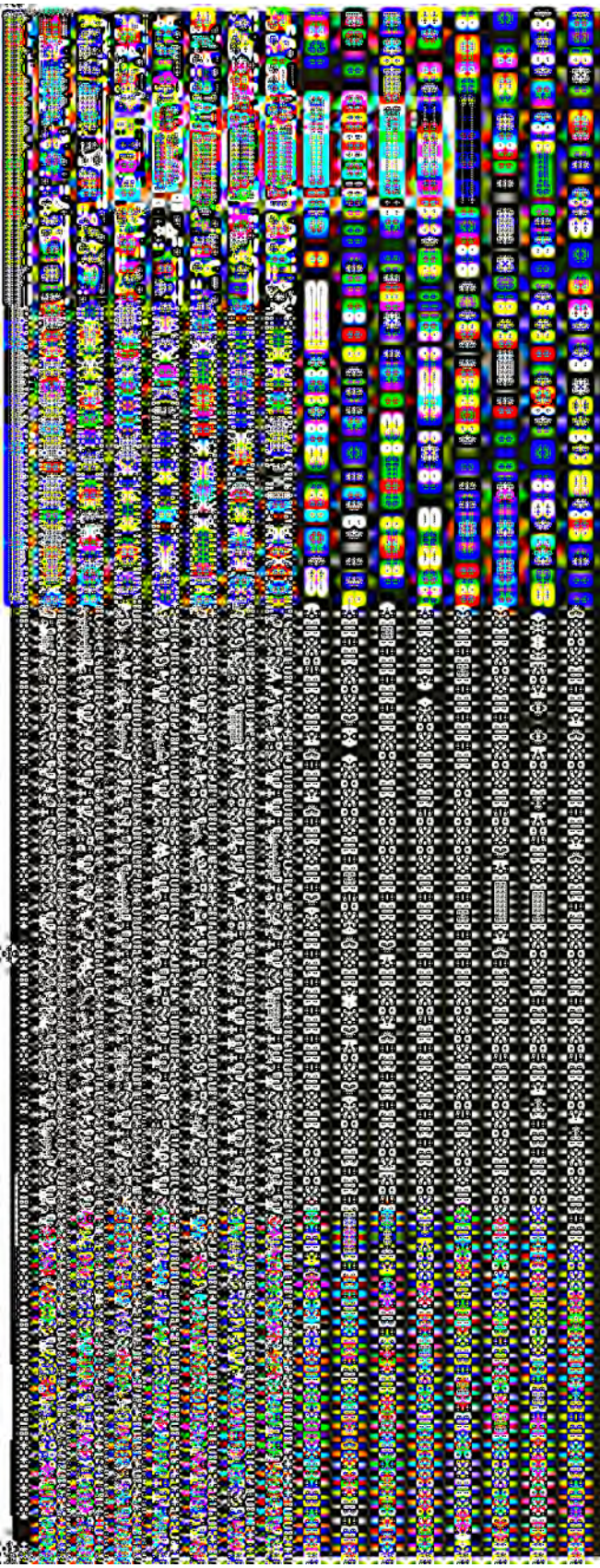
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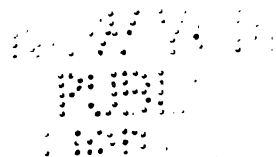
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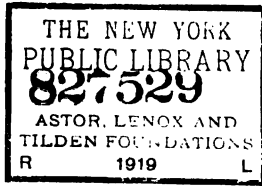
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Book IV.

KING ALFONSO.

1874-1875.

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CHAPTER I.

THE BOURBON RESTORATION.

Republicans, Carlists, and Alfonsists—Parties at home and abroad—Attitude of the clergy—Change in the mood of European opinion—Reactionary tendencies—The priests and Don Carlos—The ex-Queen Isabella—Her abdication—The Prince of Asturias proclaimed—Alfonso at Sandhurst—Incapacity and irresolution of Serrano—Defection of the army—The *pronunciamiento* of Murviedro.

To the merry-making multitude at Barcelona the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in the person of Queen Isabella's son, Alfonso II., was "like a clap of thunder in a clear sky." But to men accustomed to read the signs of the times, that consummation was only the corollary of all foregoing events.

From my first arrival at Hendaye, towards the end of August, 1874, I had been able to perceive that Don Carlos was beginning to be considerably less of a hero in the eyes of his own people than he had been

at the outset of his rash enterprise. It soon became safe to predict that the Pretender had not been working for himself and his family, and that the monarchic zeal and devotion of his followers, upon which his juvenile freaks, as well as his haughtiness and petulance, were throwing cold water, would turn to the profit of his cousin and rival, Don Alfonso. Already at that time I received clear hints that the backwardness and sluggishness of the Spanish navy in the fulfilment of its duties as coastguards arose from the dissatisfaction of its officers with the Republic. The Republic was equally unpopular with the army, though there the influence of Serrano and a few other generals had still power to keep discontent under control. There was nowhere an element of real strength in the Spanish nation, not even with the priesthood; for the priests refused to befriend any cause which they did not consider their own, and were ready to accept as such anyone which might have the best chance of success, and with which a *modus vivendi* could best be patched up. Already Figueras, when at the head of the Government, had received the tender of support of the whole Spanish clergy, if he would only proclaim Spain a "Catholic Republic." The same proposals were made at various periods to the Serrano administration. The same to the political leaders favourable to either branch of the

monarchic dynasty. Every party in Spain was aware that the priesthood would always ultimately side with the strongest; that "*Roma tien da chi vince*;" and every party, consequently, was more ready to coquet than earnestly and faithfully to combine with, or commit themselves to, the clergy.

The strength of the nation in Spain lay in the army. For many years the people had abdicated its sovereignty in favour of those conscripts that were forcibly draughted from its body. For many years soldiers had set up and pulled down ministries, influenced elections, brought together or violently dismissed the Cortes. They had in the end overthrown the monarchy, and they alone would be able, if willing, to build it up again. The Government in Spain, be it said without prejudice to any party, had long been in the hands of adventurers. Whoever had anything to lose stayed at home. The field was left open to those who had anything to gain by fishing in troubled waters.

The defeat of France in her contest with Germany in 1871 had brought about a great change in men's minds with respect to what used to be called the "*Conquests of '89*," i.e. the results of the new social disorder, dating from the first French Revolution. The revulsion of feeling could not be more complete. Half a century ago Legitimism only reckoned on the

support of some courts. Liberalism was sure of the people's suffrage. Soldiers could be used for the work of reaction; but volunteers everywhere sprang up to give their blood for what they considered freedom. Patriotism, worsted in one country, strove to retrieve its fortunes by renewing the fight in another. Between Hellenic, Italian, Belgian, German, and Polish nationalities, there were then brotherhood and solidarity. A sacred league of "the peoples" was organised against the holy alliance of the sovereigns, and the burden of the song was, "Si le despotisme conspire, conspirens la perte des rois."

With the humiliation of France the cause of cosmopolitan revolutionism seemed to lose ground. The Spanish Republic came too late to awaken any sympathy. No standard was raised in its favour; it never had a standard of its own; never produced a poet; never had a "Marseillaise." It never made itself known beyond the Pyrenees except through its postage-stamps. It had nothing but unwilling conscripts to uphold its flag in the field. Nothing but the coldest reason of state, or supreme indifference, has induced Germany and other states to recognise the Serrano-Sagasta combination. From the beginning the French Republic did all she could to oppose her Spanish sister, and only showed some good-will when "moderate"—*i.e.* retrogradist—politicians gained the upper hand.

For a time France supported Carlism ; but Don Carlos, in Spain, like Chambord in France, was too impractical and impracticable to come to terms with the irresistible ideas and exigencies of our age. With the Pretender's defeat at Irun every chance of his ascending the throne of Spain was for ever lost. But the cause of the Revolution had gained nothing by it. Conservatism of some sort, love of ease and security, steadily, however insensibly, gained ground. It did so in France, and hence by counter-stroke in Spain. After the calamities of 1870-71, France had accepted a Republic from the mere absence of any possible monarchic candidate. It cheered Thiers ; it cheered MacMahon ; it would cheer any dictator who would pave the way for an emperor. While waiting for that the only rule France could bear was a Septennate. And, for the same reason, the only arrangement in which Spain seemed to acquiesce was a Serrano Regency. The Septennate and the Serrano Regency were the signs of the times—the last throes of a tentative and transitional era. They filled up the gap between revolution and reaction. Great is in Spain, as in all countries, the power of the men who have sixpence to lose. In Spain they rallied around Prim, when he chose a Portuguese, an Italian, a Prussian prince—any prince that one state might propose, and no other state would oppose. They had driven out the Bourbons ;

but they still wished for a king, any other king than a Bourbon; but as no other king was forthcoming, they would put up even with the inevitable Bourbon. They would have accepted Don Carlos, had he not foolishly let his chance slip, had he not carried absolutism and Ultramontaniam to an excess incompatible with the notions of any man with one grain of sense in his head, although with a sixpence in his pocket. Thinking men, men of substance, did not look upon blind despotism as their only refuge against stark anarchy. They did not wish retrogradism to go more than two or three steps back. The Constitutionalism of France under Louis Philippe, that of Italy under Victor Emmanuel, or even that of their own queen, Isabella, in her earliest years, was the latest basis on which, according to their views, the experiment of a new edifice should be tried in Spain. Queen Isabella was once and for ever out of the question. But there was no reason why her dynasty, why her son, should share her perpetual ostracism. The Alfonsists were a quiet, unenterprising, undemonstrative set. They carried on their game with consummate address, and thought it would be madness on their part to show their cards while both the Carlists and the Republicans so obligingly played into their hands; while Anarchists and Separatists, Socialists and Cantonalists were damaging the republican cause past

recovery ; while Ultramontane priests and loose bands of marauders were making Carlism a word of terror and horror throughout the peninsula. It is true the words "Cayo para siempre" had been written against the progeny of Queen Isabella. But *siempre* and *jamas* are words of as little meaning in Spain as M. Rouher's *jamais* was in France. Isabella might be "for ever fallen." But, when the king dies or abdicates, the cry is still "Long live the king !"

Two circumstances contributed to encourage the aspirations of the promoters of the Bourbon restoration. Queen Isabella had, in June, 1870, been induced to renounce such rights as she might have to the throne she had forfeited, in favour of her son, Alfonso, Prince of Asturias, at that time thirteen years of age ; and the young Infante, after spending some time in a military school in Austria, had lately, October, 1874, been entered as a cadet at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. These measures were suggested to the Queen Mother by Canovas del Castillo, one of the wisest and most honourable of her former Ministers, and who, had his advice been listened to, might have saved the infatuated Queen from the catastrophe of 1868. It was deemed expedient to remove the boy Prince from the influence of the Queen's surroundings, and from the too narrow discipline of his religious instructors. The idea that the free air of an English public school could

be beneficial to Continental lads born in the purple, by giving a healthy and vigorous tone to their minds, had rapidly been gaining ground ever since the Duchess of Genoa had set the example of sending her son to fit himself for command in Italy by learning obedience and "finding his own level" at Harrow. The success of that first experiment moved other mothers, of even more exalted rank, to waive their religious prejudices and intrust their children to the keeping of masters, who, without meddling with their religious education, undertook to make neither Catholics nor Protestants, but simply men of them. There is a point beyond which people in Latin countries will not allow their priesthood to carry their power, and it is precisely that limit which the priests are perpetually striving to overstep. Many of the born Catholics—never the converts—think it possible to save the soul without killing the mind. These are naturally opposed to those dogmas of Papal Infallibility, to those doctrines of the Encyclic and Syllabus by which that poor Pope, Pius IX., in his dotage, scandalized his contemporaries, yet which Don Carlos was prompted to adopt as his party banner and war-cry. Profiting by her cousin's obstinate blindness, Queen Isabella or her advisers deemed it expedient to place the Prince of Asturias beyond reach of undue priestly influence, empowering him to see, to judge,

and choose for himself. And it is not merely for minors, but also for grown-up princes, that England has been at all times the best school for future sovereigns. No one can say how much Louis Philippe, Louis Napoleon, and above others, Leopold I. of Belgium, owed to the years of English apprenticeship. But in these cases, residence in the land of freedom was merely the result of circumstances. With the son of the Duchess of Genoa, and that of the ex-Queen of Spain, it was not only matter of choice, but of a choice made after mature deliberation and anxious discussion.

That the accession of Prince Alfonso to his mother's throne was the object of the ardent desires of all right-minded Spaniards, was, at the close of 1874, no matter of doubt. The only question was how what seemed as yet merely a far-off Utopia, might pass into the category of accomplished facts. It was idle to expect that a Bourbon restoration could ever be the result either of a constitutional vote or of a popular insurrectionary movement. The Serrano administration was cordially hated throughout Spain; and it indeed could rely on the spontaneous support of no man—except the British minister. But it was also feared; and in Madrid at least its power seemed based on the army, which it had reorganised and bribed by the usual argument of wholesale promotion.

Serrano, however, had been at no time the soldier's idol. Even immediately after the outbreak of 1868, when he had entered Madrid with the prestige of his triumph at Alcolea, he had been superseded at the head of the forces by the more crafty and energetic Prim. On his return to power, in January, 1874, Serrano only profited by a state-stroke of which another—General Pavia—had been the author, and was surrounded by old officers who considered themselves as good as he was, and who, indeed, looked down upon him as a mere carpet-knight and "politician." It was not enough for Serrano to have reconstructed or created an army; it was necessary that he should give proof of his ability to wield the weapon he had forged: that he should illustrate it by some splendid warlike exploit; and we have seen how little the Marshal had achieved, through the agency of his lieutenants, whose too full success he seemed to dread, and which he thwarted. We have seen how long he had hesitated before he bowed to the necessity of taking the supreme command upon himself. He had gone forth at last, he had his headquarters at Logroño, and was expected either to carry the war against Don Carlos to a glorious termination, or to meet on the battle-field the fate to which his old comrade, Concha Marquess del Duero, had lately succumbed. How things might have gone with Serrano had he gone back to Madrid at the

head of an army flushed with victory, and rendered compact and unanimous by a prosperous campaign, it would now be idle to speculate. The Marshal obtained no victory, and suffered no defeat. He was, or thought himself, simply snowed up at Logroño. The weather, which had been mild all the time lost by him in unaccountable delays, broke out into unusual inclemency on the very day of his arrival. Incessant showers deluged the plain; fearful snow-storms, driven by raging winds, swept over the mountains; there was no truce to the war of the elements; the succession of frost and thaw was so frequent, so rapid and sudden, as to make all roads impassable, to baffle all calculation, and frustrate all design.

The heavens seemed to be against Serrano, and perhaps every other man might have been equally powerless against the difficulties that obstructed his progress; but those who judged at a distance questioned whether his inaction proceeded from want of power or of will. He had unfortunately taken leave of his Madrid friends with rash confidence, boastfully inviting them to eat their Christmas turkey with him at Pamplona, the Carlists' siege of which he hoped to raise by merely showing himself at Logroño. But Christmas had come and gone, and at Logroño Serrano still stuck without budging one inch. The army under his immediate orders in the north, as

I have hinted, fretted and murmured. They doubted their leader's abilities. They began to question his loyalty; they thought him capable, if not of passing over to Don Carlos, at least of patching up some terms of agreement with the Pretender, some second edition of the iniquitous, though useful, *Convenio* of Vergara of 1839. But if the troops whom Serrano might hope to awe by his presence were almost ready for mutiny, what could be expected of those that were quartered here and there at a distance, panting for their share of the spoils of the Civil War, and worn out by the dulness of a prolonged garrison life? If the very generals of his staff wavered in their allegiance, what confidence could be put in those who were in command in the provinces? What reliance in Primo de Rivera, who had been looked upon as a formidable rival at the time of Serrano's accession to power, and had to be propitiated by a tender of the supreme command of the forces in Madrid? In that capacity, having the Government and the Cortes at his discretion, Primo needed only give a hint to his devoted friend Martinez Campos, and the result was that *pronunciamiento* of Murviedro which startled us at Barcelona, as it convulsed all Spain, which threw the Sagasta administration into the most helpless confusion in Madrid, and caused Serrano to lose all presence of

mind, to mistrust his soldiers and officers and his very staff, and, thinking only of his personal safety, to steal away ignominiously from his headquarters, crossing over to France, and never stopping till he saw himself comfortably lodged in his hotel at Bayonne.

CHAPTER II.

THE EASTERN COAST.

New Year's Day in Barcelona—Fine weather and good news—King Alfonso's route—From Barcelona to Valencia—The maritime region—Its semi-Italian character—The rate of travelling—The scenery—Soil—Climate—Produce—Irrigation—Its effects.

A PURE sky and a bright sun ushered in the new year in Barcelona. The day found men's hearts in perfect harmony with its auspicious brilliancy; men disposed to be pleased with themselves and with the affairs of this world, hardly recovered from the joyous surprise into which the tidings of the last day of the old year had thrown them. What a sudden, yet, in their opinion, what a happy reverse of fortune! What a metamorphosis! "In what other country," they said, "was such a revolution, or rather such a brilliant, bloodless, blameless, counter-revolution, ever accomplished? It took all the energy of England, the frosts of Russia, the patriotism of Germany, the defection of Austria, the long-smothered indignation of outraged Europe,

to bring about the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in France, in 1814. In Spain the reconstruction of the Bourbon throne, in 1874, was achieved by the daring of one man, by the proclamation of one name, by the peaceful march of a few regiments, by the consummation of one of those inexplicable, impossible transactions, which are known to the world as 'things of Spain.' Changes which elsewhere only the ingenuity of theatrical mechanism works on the stage are here effected as the mere common-place occurrences of real life. What in other regions would task all the skill of a romancer, is in this country the result of the well-laid plans of scheming politicians. With Spaniards all is done as if by magic. Nothing but the unforeseen ever happened here. This is the land of surprises."

Great uncertainty prevailed for several days at Barcelona with respect to the route by which the newly-proclaimed King would travel to his capital. Communication across the Pyrenees was at that season almost impracticable, and a landing at Bilbao or Santander would have brought the august traveller into too close a proximity to the Carlist quarters. The same objection arose against Barcelona, the railway between that city and Saragossa being only open to travellers on Carlist sufferance, and beset with dangers, which railway trains did not always escape.

It was, therefore, understood and positively announced that the young King should be conveyed on board a steamer from Marseilles to Valencia, and hence he should travel by rail, under a good escort, to Madrid.

All interest in Spanish affairs seemed, for the moment, concentrated in Valencia, and to Valencia I betook myself, leaving Barcelona on Sunday, January 3, by a steamer of the French Messageries, which landed me at the Grao, the port of Valencia, in the afternoon of the ensuing day.

That part of the Iberian peninsula which looks eastward across the Mediterranean, facing Italy and the Italian islands, from the Pyrenean frontier at Rosas down to Gerona and Barcelona, and from the latter city to Tarragona and Valencia, seems to mirror the loveliness of the opposite shore—that loveliness by which so many strangers are drawn to cross the Alps in quest of Paradise; and the aspect of the country as one sails or follows the railway track along shore is in many respects rather Italian than Spanish. A traveller might fancy himself coasting the Tyrrhenian Sea along the Riviera, or the Adriatic on the skirts of the Marches and Puglia; and the illusion is kept up by the dialects of the people who crowd upon him at the ports or stations, which make him rub his eyes as if he awoke from a dream, wondering whether those uncouth

but racy idioms, those sharp but pithy accents, are things of Spain or not rather the very utterances with which his ears were made familiar as he was traversing sub-Alpine, Ligurian, or Provençal lands.

The very pace at which he is carried has ceased to be, or has not yet become, thoroughly Spanish; and there can be no contrast more striking than the reasonably quick rate of travelling of the Barcelona and Valencia express with that of the *correo* or mail train running between Madrid and Saragossa or Irun, the latter seldom exceeding the speed of a decent omnibus; as if the object of the railway companies were to hurry their fare through those districts where he might wish to linger, mercilessly detaining him among those wilds of savage Aragon and dreary Castile, the bare memory of which will haunt him as an ugly nightmare as long as he lives.

The traveller's enjoyment of these regions of Eastern Spain is very nearly the same, whether he fares along them by rail or steamer. The Southern line traverses the level shore, frequently close to the sea, and seldom out of sight either of the expanse of blue waves on the left, or of the mountains—the Sierra de Almenar, that of Moncayo, and the Muela de Ares—on the right. Some of the ridges of these high chains slope down almost to the sea and bar the way, breaking through the sameness of the verdant

plain with their bare, abrupt, and rugged rocks, and following the course of the streams which supply that verdure with inexhaustible freshness; for the shores of Southern Catalonia and those of Valencia enjoy, here and there, the blessing, rare in Spain, of a plentiful irrigation, the natives of these districts, as well as some of those of Granada and Murcia, having been sufficiently provident not to allow the canals and other hydraulic works of the old Moors, Romans, and Carthaginians to go to utter waste.

All along this route—at Tortosa, close to the mouth of the Ebro, at Vinaroz, Benicarlo, Torreblanca, Castellon de la Plana, Nules, Villafranca, Murviedro, the glorious historical spot which Spanish patriotism has rechristened Sagunto, and on which Martinez Campos' *pronunciamiento* had at this very moment conferred fresh lustre—all along these places, I say, you have the same agricultural phenomenon which strikes you in Lombardy, a soil of which not one square inch is allowed to be out of cultivation, and most of which is made to yield at the same time a variety of produce. Like the Lombard or Emilian plain, the shore of Eastern Spain bears the semblance of a vast park or forest of low trees. But, while in North Italy those trees are mostly young mulberries, here, between Tarragona and Valencia, you have rows of nut and almond, of olive, of carob, of orange and pomegranate, and other

fruit trees, bearing witness to the mildness of a climate where winter is unknown.

The vines, here in Eastern Spain, and indeed in other parts of the peninsula, are not, as in Italy, trailed in picturesque festoons on the trees and across from tree to tree; for the Spaniard knows enough about wine to be aware that its strength and spirit depend, like the might of Antæus, on its close contact with mother earth. The vines are planted in rows, either in the open or under the trees; often alternately with stripes of wheat and other grain or garden stuff, the vine stock seldom exceeding 18 inches in height, and the trees which grow above being so young, so small-leaved, or else so vigorously lopped and cropped as to offer no obstruction to the all-ripening sunrays.

The soil, as seen from a carriage window, does not seem so deep, so black or so rich as that of the great valley of the Po; but, on the other hand, here and there one sees such crops of wheat, so thick, so full, so ripe, so wonderfully bronzed by the sun, that Milan or Bologna could not easily match them; for the strength of the sun is here combined with the power of water to a degree unknown anywhere else in Europe, and where both influences are at work, the mere quality of the soil becomes matter of secondary importance.

On the other hand, there is nowhere on this route,

and hardly anywhere else in Spain, such a thing as a meadow; for irrigation here, though it moistens the land, seems scarcely to affect the atmosphere, those drenching night-dews, those gauze-like white mists, those heavy rolling clouds and frequent thunder-storms, which make Northern Italy green during the three or four months of summer drought, are unknown in Eastern, Northern, and Central Spain. A mere grass-plot before the Museum of Madrid drinks in as much water as would fertilise an Indian rice-field; and that grass often pales in spite of it and withers before June is over. The Spaniards have no hayfields or enduring pastures: they keep their cattle alive as they best can with straw, and, like the Moors, feed their horses on barley. That system of stable feeding and stable breeding which has lately made the Lombard and Emilian boor a seller, while he was once a purchaser, of cattle, has never been attempted here, where it would be absolutely impracticable. Luckily or unluckily for him, the Spaniard has in the Mancha, in Estremadura, and throughout Castile and Aragon, immense tracts of waste lands used as pasture, admirably adapted to rear fine studs of horses, and to supply wild, or, as they say here, "brave," bulls for the ring.

No country or climate can be allowed a monopoly of all earthly blessings; and this garden of Eastern

Spain teems with too great a variety of produce to give it much reason to lament the absence of hay-ricks. Heaps of sheaves of the best wheat in the world might well be taken as ample compensation, and if the Spanish proverb is true, that "Duelos con pan son menos," or that bread is a soother of pain, there is also no doubt that no country is so well fed with excellent white bread as this is, and that, if it has not enough of its own, if the flats of Castile and Aragon are not as rich in cereal produce as the plains of Tortosa or Castellon, the cause, however remote, must be sought in the improvidence, in the unthrift and gross ignorance of the population.

CHAPTER III.

VALENCIA.

From Barcelona to Valencia—Winter weather in the south—A day at sea—A day on shore—Valencia—Its climate—Its brightness and mildness—Its enervating effects—Its unhealthiness—The Valencians—Their appearance and character—Advantages and drawbacks of a southern climate—In contrast with the English climate.

I LEFT Barcelona, as I said, on Sunday, January 3rd, 1874, in an atmosphere so mild and genial, and with a sea so still and smooth as to enable me to enjoy the "Roundabout Papers," reading and musing till long after sunset, with never an overcoat or wrapper of any kind about me, never feeling the least need of such a protection. The night continued equally warm and balmy till a late hour. The morning was chill and dewy, but bright at break of day. The sun announced his approach by a blaze as if of a furnace, lighting up the thin veil-like wavelets of cloud in the east with gorgeous blood-red hues. He then seemed

to change his mind, as if inclined to go back; the clouds became crimson, then claret-coloured; and though the sun did not disappoint us, his face, rayless and pale like faded gold, just showed itself for one moment above the dip of the horizon, then wrapped itself in mist and intimated that we were in for a cloudy day.

The calm was still perfect; not a breath of air ruffled the waters; but the mountains on the coast were dimmed by a haze which thickened as the day advanced; and the atmosphere was almost as chill and damp as it might have been on the Thames on a fine day in September. A cloudy yet gladsome day it was on shore as we landed at the Grao, the seaport of Valencia, and my luggage and myself were jolted in one of the coffin-like, ramshackle coaches on two wheels, here called *tartanas*, or land-gondolas, over the ruts of the bad half-league of mud that leads to the city.

My friends in Valencia condoled me on my ill-fortune in arriving on a wintry day which quite libelled their climate, and in the afternoon, at the Glorieta, the winter-garden, people put up their umbrellas and made me aware of a few drops of rain, which, without their warning, would have fallen unheeded and indeed unperceived. Late at night and in the morning there were smart showers, and

I had made up my mind for a thorough wet day. But the frown of nature in these regions has all the make-believe of the chiding of a fond mother, and is soon followed by her smile. Long before noon the rain was over; the sun broke out, the sky was swept clear of every speck of cloud, and the afternoon was bright and dry, and warm almost beyond endurance.

Who would not live in Valencia? The average number of rainy days here is 38 in the year. Snow, we are told, is among the things unknown. The glass seldom falls to the freezing-point, and never below, and in the coldest day one can sit for hours reading or writing without a fire, which would, indeed, be a doubtful luxury. With all that, however, is the climate of Valencia, is any southern climate, in every respect, the most eligible?

I found in Valencia, at my hotel, the Fonda de Madrid, General Cialdini, the same gallant officer I had visited in the winter of 1860 at Gaeta—a place lying at about the same low degree of latitude, and rejoicing in an equally mild and soft atmosphere—I saw the General at Gaeta, just after he had by might of cannon driven the Bourbon of Naples from that last stronghold of his kingdom; and here he was, at Valencia as at Gaeta, longing for a breath of Piedmont's icy air, pining for the light of Alpine

snow. And did I not most heartily sympathise with him in both places?

"From its particular situation, being, as it is, sheltered by lofty hills from the cold and dry continental winds, which blow from W. and N., and open and much exposed to the warm moisture of the sea-breeze, Valencia," we are told in the guide-books, "possesses all the characteristics of a warm yet moist temperature, *essentially depressing*."

Can one take in all the meaning of those last two words? Can any man in the long run love a "Paradise" where the climate enervates and unmans him; where, agreeably to the saying of the Valencians themselves, "Flesh is grass, and grass water; men are women, and women nothing?" ("Carne es verdura; Verdura es agua; Hombres son mugeres, y Mugeres nada.") Is not that climate the most desirable where a healthy man enjoys the fullest consciousness of his well-being, where he exults in the free exercise of his mental and bodily faculties?

The objection does not extend to all southern climates. In the tropics, at Jamaica, 3,000 or 4,000 feet up the Blue Mountains, at Gibraltar, at Messina, in the constant draught of the sea-breeze along the straits, even at Cadiz, on a projecting peninsula, life may have charms. The sun, when it has fair play,

hardens what it bakes; and one finds even men of white blood in possession of all their energies in the very heat of adust Africa. What exhausts human strength is not a summer climate, but a climate of perpetual spring. It is the warm yet moist temperature of these Mediterranean nooks, sheltered from the cold winds by mountains and open to the sea-breezes; snuggeries like this Valencia, or Malaga, or Nervi, or Mola di Gaeta, which may be balm in the winter months to diseased lungs, but which are apt to become furnaces in summer, when the sirocco, the breath of the desert, transforms Valencia into an oven; the very sky becomes iron-gray; birds, insects and plants droop, and man lies prostrate.

It is possible to live at Valencia—who doubts it? A wise Providence adapts this people to their soft air as it tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. Every human race is best intended for the climate in which it is destined to live, and the only mistake lies in the notion that man can change his nature by a change of climate. “Mortality in Valencia,” we learn, “is 1 in 31; and in 1861 there died 13 persons aged between 90 and 100.” But the question is, what we understand life to be; and the result is, here in Valencia, either to dry up people into mummies, or to expand them into lumps of unwholesome obesity with olive-green complexion and flabby skin. The

extreme sensitiveness contracted from the soft habits engendered by the climate unfits the natives for the enjoyment of the climate itself. Where I was yesterday glowing with a sensation of genial heat, the hardiest men, weather-beaten soldiers and sturdy peasants, were shivering with cold. They crept before me, the gentlemen with their *capas* up to their noses; the artisans doubly swathed in their *mantas*, with coil upon coil of coarse wool round their necks, a mass of coils, thick as a bolster. The open air seems to be their worst enemy. They do not go out to breathe it by day, fearing the sun; and not by night, dreading the damp. They have only one short hour for their promenade between sunset and dusk, and even then I did not see one open carriage, private or public, throughout the length of the Paseo de la Alameda, the fine avenue planted with a double row of plane-trees on the left bank of the waterless river.

It is well to praise the wisdom of the old inhabitants of Valencia, as of those of Barcelona, Genoa, and other maritime southern localities, where men reared up tall houses on both sides of narrow, crowded streets, and by the contrivance of projecting roofs and bulging balconies, managed to shut out the summer suns and the wintry winds. Such a style of building may best suit the southern climate, but does not that very fact emphatically condemn the

climate itself? What becomes of the charm of the cloudless sky and of the deep blue sea if a man is to shut himself between stone walls, and be denied a glimpse of the outer world, if he must climb up to the top of the cathedral steeple for a panorama of the lovely Huerta, the famous mountain-girt kitchen-garden and orchard, which is the pride of the city, and where "carob, flax, the orange and the citron, the palm and the mulberry, grow with a wild luxuriance?" Men can live here, and, as we have seen, even grow old; but so they can in Rome if they huddle together round the Ghetto, in the Rione de' Monti, and wherever the apparently pure, yet, in reality, murderous air of the Pincio, of the Borghese, or Doria Pamphili garden cannot reach them. At Valencia, as in the Papal city, now the Italian capital, the foulest quarters are the safest. One must *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*—choose one's residence in a crowded neighbourhood where houses rise higgledy-piggledy with stables; where palaces are cumbered all round with hovels; where churches are defiled at their very doors, and vile smells assail the nostrils of the passer-by so outrageously as to make his very eyes smart with their pungency.

It may not be the climate's fault, but it is a constant fact that the loveliness of a southern region can nowhere be found associated with that cleanliness which is alone a guarantee of healthiness. Here, at Valencia, "the

drains are badly managed, and the Levanter, or east wind, often brings with it abominable exhalations. The drinking water is drawn from wells considerably charged with lime. It does not dissolve soap, makes vegetables hard, impedes digestion, and is disagreeable to the taste. Owing to the sudden transitions of temperature, caused by the alternation of land and sea breezes, bronchitis, quinsy, and all diseases of the lungs are prevalent in winter. In summer, gastric fever, diarrhoea, etc., immediately ensue upon a free use of ice. For consumptive persons the climate is not favourable; in cases of intermittent fevers it should be avoided, for it would prove deadly." Such, upon the strength of competent local authority, are some of the ills southern flesh is heir to in ordinary times, making up almost as long and ominous a list as that of influenza, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and other scourges which are, rather gratuitously, considered peculiar to more northern latitudes. Besides, the sufferings arising in these warm countries from such everyday complaints as I have enumerated, are a mere nothing compared with the havoc not unfrequently wrought by cholera and other epidemic or contagious diseases, aided in many instances by the unclean and improvident habits of the people. At Barcelona, a few years before this present date, 1875, the yellow fever broke out with such intense virulence, that in the marine suburb of Barceloneta, inhabited by seamen

and artisans of the humblest classes, it carried off its victims by thousands, and would have swept away the whole population, had not many of the poorer classes been forcibly taken from their plague-stricken dwellings, and conveyed for safety to a place of refuge, away in the mountains.

Have I dwelt on this dark side of a sunny picture from an ill-natured desire of scaring English pleasure-seekers from their periodical trips to their favourite haunts on the Mediterranean shores?

Such has by no means been my purpose.

I only wished to impress on those good folks whom domestic, financial, or other circumstances confine to the fogs and frosts of this old British island that good and evil have been so equally distributed by Providence all over the earth as to best fit every zone of it to its peculiar race, or, to put it more correctly, to breed every race in the way best suited to its peculiar zone.

In England, "the rain it raineth every day." The sun, when it appears at all, often shows its face like a begrimed copper dish, emitting neither light nor warmth. In England we have to battle fiercely and not always successfully with wet weather for our solitary hay-crop, and we have often to be thankful if, when wheat will not ripen, we are at least allowed to gather its straw. The east wind is a ruthless murderer, and did not spare

even the poet who indited an ode to exalt its bracing influence on British muscles and nerves. Many are the raw, the dark, the soaking days in our own beloved land to be sure; but we know how to value fine weather when we get it, and ours is the climate where "doing nothing" has nothing "sweet" in it. It is the climate for working, striving and ruling men, where indulgence and improvidence, like all other vices, bring their own punishment—a climate to be fought with and conquered, but calling forth in that very struggle the energies by which man overcomes hardships and achieves victories.

After that, if any Englishman still feels disposed to quarrel with his native climate, let him sing "Home, sweet home," and try a twelvemonth of the perpetual spring of Valencia.

CHAPTER IV.

DON ALFONSO EXPECTED.

Valencia on the eve of the King's arrival—The port and the city—
Sights in the port—Sights in the city—Buildings and gardens
—A festive day in Valencia—Priests and soldiers—Prospects
of the new reign—The Carlists—The priests—A Madrid
deputation—Three generals—A cardinal.

ON the 11th of January, 1875, Don Alfonso was expected to land in Valencia.

We were uncertain about the new King's movements till a late hour on the previous night; for telegraphic communication was crippled throughout a great part of Spain, and a message from Barcelona to the city of the Cid had first to travel by cable to Marseilles, hence to go to Paris, London, and Southampton, where again it crossed the sea to Santander, and finally by the roundabout route of Madrid it reached us.

The King, we learnt by this means, was to leave the Catalonian capital on the 10th, at 2 o'clock, in

the afternoon; but of his actual departure we had heard nothing further; and we could only conjecture that, if he abided by the programme, and actually left Barcelona at the appointed time, he would be at the Grao some time in the morning, the distance from port to port for a somewhat heavy vessel like the ironclad *Navas de Tolosa* being about twenty hours.

When, after long waiting in vain for positive intelligence, it became advisable for the good people of Valencia to part for the night, it was agreed that the peal of the bells from all the steeples of the city should be the announcement of the arrival of the *Navas* at the Grao.

The Grao lies, as I said, at about half-a-league from the city, across a level ground of wondrous fertility, probably the accumulation of mud from the river Thuria or Guadalaviar for a great many centuries.

From the port the city is reached by a broad avenue, planted with double rows of trees, and intended as a pleasure thoroughfare, but habitually allowed to fall into a shocking state of neglect, very trying to the wheels and axle-trees of the vehicles, and to the bones of the ill-starred mortals who sit in them. An attempt had been made to smooth the way on this particular occasion by throwing stones as big as eggs into the deep ruts, but that only made the ground

harder, not more even ; and only added to the discomfort the danger of giving the horses an awkward stumble and a fall, should the young King prefer riding to driving to the city, as he had done at Barcelona, and as he was expected to do here.


The Grao, as the name implies, is a kind of lagoon, cut off from the open sea by a double line of breakwaters, constituting an outer and an inner harbour, the latter offering a tolerably safe shelter for small craft, a few scores of which, chiefly merchant vessels, are ordinarily moored to the piers. The marine view from the pier-head is vast and cheerful, but the shore all round is flat, and the hills that shut in the landscape are too far off to lend the place much beauty or variety.

The port was on the previous day, Sunday, all gay with flags and pennants, hanging from the masts of the ships, from the station of the short railway branch that joins the port to the city, and especially from the shed or pavilion which was being hastily reared at the water's edge for the King's landing. The broad avenue from the Grao, after traversing the plain in a straight line towards the town, comes to a sudden turn at the bridge where it crosses the river, leaving on its left bank the Paseo de la Alameda of which it is a continuation, and enters the city at the Plaza de Tetuan or of St. Domingo—a fine, broad thoroughfare, flanked

on both sides by lofty buildings, the most conspicuous of which, on the left as you enter the town, is the Capitania-General, destined to welcome the King within its walls. Several conspicuous members of the nobility of the place had vied with one another in their tender of hospitality to the youthful sovereign, conspicuous among whom was the Marquis de Dos Aguas, the owner of the most magnificent palace in Valencia. All these private offers had, however, been summarily declined, and it was settled that the King's host should be the Captain-General, General Quesada, who would be able to apply literally that phrase of courtesy so current among Spaniards when they receive a guest at the door ; and, pointing to *their own* house, say : "Step into *your* house" ("Su casa de Usted").

The Capitania-General of Valencia is one of the many lofty and handsome buildings with which that Phoenix of Bourbon monarchs, Charles III., embellished the states over which he was successively destined to reign, and the finest specimens of which are the Museo Borbonico at Naples, and the old Custom House in Madrid. The Glorieta, the favourite home promenade of the Valencians, adjoins the Captain-General's mansion as its garden ; it has the Plaza de Tetuan on one side, and on the other it abuts on the river, beyond which, as we have seen, lies the Alameda and the open country far away to the sea and mountains.

At Valencia, independently of all political sympathies, the King was sure to meet with a warm and cheerful reception. No effort whatever is required to bring out the whole population of a Spanish town to air their fine clothes on a gala day. On the previous Wednesday, the Festival of the Three Kings, the town bore an indescribable look of joyous animation. The sun shone bright, of course, and there was a break in the week-day's work. The tide of human beings ebbed and flowed along the Calle de St. Vicente and Calle de Mar, and it surged at the Glorieta and Alameda with no other object than that of warming itself in the sun, and being happy and idle. Their enjoyment hardly needed to be enhanced by the martial show of the garrison, which, drawn up in a long array on the road to the Grao, was reviewed by the Captain-General. It was a force of about 4,000 men who marched past, in good order, well armed and equipped, and "breathing courage," as old Homer describes the Achæans, from their sun-burnt countenances; and one could not, on looking at them, resist the melancholy reflection that all that strength, all that valour, should have been hitherto of so little avail to keep order in the land; nay, that it should have been the very means by which ambitious men contrived to plunge the country into perpetual hot water.



That task of providing for the public security of which the Serrano Government with all its armed force was either unable or unwilling to acquit itself, would now devolve on a monarch who could only bring the energies of a lad of seventeen to bear upon it. Here was work enough to fill the King's hands. The hope that sympathy, or weariness, or secret understanding might induce the Carlists to lay down their arms and give up the hopeless contest, had cheered Spanish hearts on New Year's Day, but on Epiphany that ray of light was already fading apace. It began to be felt that Navarre and the Basque Provinces would have to be won by hard fighting, and the young prince in the influence of whose presence in the north so much confidence was felt, would have to emulate the exploits of the Cid, if he aspired to inaugurate his reign by the pacification of the country.

The feeling of triumph with which the people, at least of the upper classes, were preparing to hail the King's accession was not unmingled with misgiving. The adhesion of all Conservative parties to the new order of things seemed too sudden, too eager, and too general. The attempt at reconciliation was too indiscriminate. As usual, the Government tended to base itself on a coalition ; to bring together heterogeneous, if not hostile elements, the seeds of almost inevitable future discord and collision. The Queen and the Queen's friends were

said to be coming, and with them Montpensier and Serrano, and many others not recommended by consistency in any cause, and not certainly by their zeal for that which was then triumphant.

There was something alarming, too, in the earnest and almost insolent exultation of the clergy. I had just come from Barcelona, where the brief ascendancy of the mob had so utterly demoralised the priests as to banish them from the streets long after every shadow of danger was over, and where the phenomenon of a Spanish town without their long black frocks and broad-brimmed Don Basilio hats was striking to a stranger; and I found here at Valencia the priests masters of the situation; their name legion; their bearing haughty and arrogant; priests with stern countenances; tall, portly, herculean; their stature and corpulence oddly contrasting with the diminutive size and the gaunt, half-starved look of so many of the soldiery.

In those priests and in those soldiers has been at all times, and, I fear, will for ever be, the bane of Spain. As the troops came back from the review on the same Wednesday, they were crossed by a procession with bell, book, and candle, bearing the Host to some dying person in the Calle de Tetuan, crowded at the time with promenaders, on foot and in carriages. The whole street stood still as if spell-bound, the soldiers halting and kneeling, and striking the butt ends of their

muskets with one great rattling thump on the pavement, the men in livery alighting from their perch behind their master's vehicles, the people on the sidewalks prostrating themselves; all bent in adoration of "His Majesty," yet not so deep in their devotion as not to notice and scowl at the stranger who, hat in hand, but with unbent knee, stood by, respecting but not sharing their religious tenets, and only wondering how many, even of the clergy there present, really believed in that most awful of all mysteries, and how many merely accepted it without questioning, and bowed to it from blind old usage.

But such at all times has been the Spaniard's religion. It is not so much adherence on his part to his own creed that concerns him. He takes it up or casts it aside as the humour seizes him. He worships his priest or kills him by turns in his fits of ultra-Catholic or ultra-Democratic frenzy. But so long as he sets up his idol he is a fanatic whose bigotry is founded on pride; he insists on his neighbour and on the whole world sharing his idolatry.

Already, on the 10th, expectation of the King's arrival had kept the city in a state of feverish excitement. About 1 o'clock the Madrid deputation came in by train, and their arrival was in itself an event, and caused a great gathering of people at the railway station. Three marshals of Spain, many of its grandees,

gentlemen of rank representing knightly orders, political clubs, and numerous other associations, alighted in a pleasing confusion on the platform. The Valencian nobles and many of the wealthy merchants and citizens were on the spot, each of them eagerly bent on securing one or more of those distinguished guests for his domestic circle, old acquaintance, renown, or political sympathy generally determining the choice. The greeting between friends and the welcome to strangers were equally hearty and joyous. There was something touching and catching in that expansion of affectionate feelings.

Spaniards do not shake hands like Englishmen; they do not hug one another and kiss on both cheeks like Frenchmen. They have a peculiar *accolade* of their own. They step up to one another with a half embrace, the open palm of the one resting on the other's shoulder, and patting it half playfully, half tenderly, as one would do with children, while the familiar address of *chico* (little one, boy, or old boy), usual even among gray-beards, keeps up the illusion, and establishes between grown-up men the familiarity of almost childish intercourse.

Men of singular antecedents met here; many of them after long absence; men in some instances who had stuck together, fought or suffered for the same cause, and men who had been arrayed in hostile ranks

against one another for a whole lifetime, and who now laid aside all rancours, and stood on a ground on which reconciliation seemed practicable ; old men, for the most part with a weary look, yet a hopeful expression, and that aristocratic manner which would have singled them out in a crowd as personages of distinction, even had not the frequent appellations of "Marques" interchanged between them revealed the rank to which every second or third man present belonged.

In the midst of all the hubbub room was made for the marshals or captains-general, as one by one, followed by their aides-de-camp, they threaded their way through the crowd. First was the Conde de Cheste, Marques de la Pezuela, tall and good-looking, with a noble countenance and bearing, in the full uniform of his rank ; a man of stern counsels, whose decisive measures, as men now seemed to think, had they been adopted, might perhaps have saved the Queen's throne at the September crisis six years before. Next came Pavia, Marques of Novaliches, also in military costume, making up by nods and smiles and hand-shaking for want of words, his articulation being rendered almost hopelessly indistinct by the wound that shattered his jaw at Alcolea : Novaliches, loyal to the end, and among so many thinking of "honour"—*i.e.* honours—the only one who had been ruled by

"duty." The last of the three was Zabala, in plain *bourgeois* garb and appearance, good-humoured and jovial, full of kindly feelings to all men, loyal and true to all governments, minding his soldier's business, and considering partizanship in politics unbecoming in a military man, and simply the conduct of a meddling and troublesome servant. The Cardinal-Archbishop of Valladolid, who, as the highest Church dignitary in the kingdom, was to be at the head of the deputation, was not in attendance, as it was said, "owing to a recent domestic bereavement," possibly also because the Restoration was not sufficiently mature for a prudent ecclesiastic to feel sure of the upshot, and it is always good policy to "light a candle before the Archangel and one before his sable antagonist, till at least one is sure who is to have the upper hand."

The leadership of the clergy devolved, therefore, on the Cardinal-Archbishop of Valencia, a "man of little faith," who had, the 30th of December, refused to throw open his cathedral for a *Te Deum*, when Martinez Campos came to wake him at 5 o'clock in the morning, bidding the priests offer up thanks to the Almighty who had, through the agency of the army, effected a Bourbon Restoration. The worthy Cardinal, who had himself been a soldier in his youth—a sergeant in a light cavalry regiment on

the Christino side, but had lately coquetted with the Republic—was by this time fully reconverted to King Alfonso's side, and the zeal of the wary prelate was, of course, all the more ardent for his recent hesitation and backsliding.

CHAPTER V.

DON ALFONSO IN VALENCIA.

The King's arrival—The King on board—King's weather—A scene of splendour—The King's personal appearance—His behaviour—His address—The King's progress—A levée—A review—The King's horsemanship—Impression on the multitude—Their judgment of the King—*Varium et mutabile*—The King and Cardinal.

It had been understood, as I said, that the first peal of the church bells should be the signal announcing that the King's squadron hove in sight; that the second peal should let us know when that squadron cast anchor; and that the third should convey the information that the King had put his foot on terra firma.

It was only about 9 a.m., January 11, 1875, that the bells gave voice for the first time. We went forth into the streets, already swarming with people, and set out for the Grao, by the side of a magnificent field-battery, which, with other troops of all arms,

was hastening to the post assigned to it in the pageant.

At the entrance of the pavilion, erected in the King's honour at the landing-stairs, which was still unready, as all Spanish preparations are at the eleventh hour, the commission appointed by the provincial deputation to greet the King was assembling, and, thanks to the courtesy of its president, the Marquis de Cáceres, and to the friendly offices of the editor of a local journal, we were allowed to join it. We embarked on board the little steam-tug, *Jaime I.*, and went out into the roadstead where the *Navas de Tolosa*, the King's ship, was riding at anchor, and already beset with hundreds of boats crammed with eager spectators. The *Numancia* and the *Villa de Cadiz*, which had sailed from Marseilles with the *Navas*, had parted company in the night, and only came in at a late hour in the afternoon.

We soon found ourselves on board the King's ship, the commission assembling on the quarter-deck, surrounded by a host of land and sea officers of all ranks, and stood awaiting the King, who, we were told, would presently make his appearance.

There had been somewhat heavy clouds in the early morning, but they caused little apprehension, for a climate in which rainy days are only thirty-five in three hundred and sixty-five, was surely not going

to spoil the people's pleasure on such an auspicious occasion. By this time, in fact, the sky was beautifully clear, and the sun warm enough to make the awning which sheltered us a perfect luxury.

The view over sea and land was magnificent; the water all thronged with light craft closing round with eager expectation; the sea-walls and quays beset by a dense mass of spectators; the shipping in the harbour, and the buildings on shore, all gaudy with gold and crimson—the national colours.

Away in the rear rose the domes and spires of the city, and farther off the mountains which encircle and fertilise Valencia's "kitchen-garden," every object distinct, and standing out in bold relief in the purity of a speckless atmosphere.

We had barely been waiting for two or three minutes, when the King was in the midst of us, a youth, to judge from appearance, about nineteen or twenty years of age—though we knew from the almanack only seventeen—rather more than five feet eight inches in height, slim and slender built, with soft down just perceptible on the upper lip, a pale and somewhat dingy complexion, an easy bearing, a brisk, elastic step, and a thorough command over his nerves.

He wore a plain military tunic and a captain-general's cap, with no other distinction than a diminutive

Order of the Golden Fleece, a mere boy's trinket—probably the very one that was laid on his cradle at his birth—hanging on his neck, and the Star of Charles III. glittering on his breast. He had no sword.

I stood close to him, on his left, next to the Marquis de Cáceres, as the King listened to the short address delivered by the Civil Governor of the Province. The King listened, a slight smile of easy benignity lighting up his youthful features, dignified and earnest, yet with a scarcely perceptible twinkle of humour about his mouth, as if struck with the novelty and strangeness of his position, hardly realising the change that a few days had wrought in his existence, not certain as yet whether it was not altogether “such a curious dream !”

The sharp brow projecting from a not very high forehead, and shading not very large but bright eyes, might strike a physiognomist as indicative of uncommon shrewdness and intelligence, and of a by no means imaginative, but frank, firm, and resolute, nature and disposition. The features were not regular, and not Borbonic, but pleasing. The Spaniards about me had only one word to characterise his looks: The King was “*simpatico*.”

At the close of the Governor's address the King was ready with his answer. It was not long, and

it had in all probability been prepared and learnt by heart beforehand. The delivery was that of a smart schoolboy, well up for his examination. The gist of it was a happy allusion to Don Jaime of Aragon—a name particularly dear to the Valencians—who, like Alfonso himself, had come in early life to the throne, and whose reign fills one of the brightest pages in the country's annals. The young King “did not flatter himself that he could emulate the deeds of that great monarch, but he would be guided in his government by the same principles which determined Don Jaime's actions—religious faith and love for his people.”

The words were to the point and quite a hit, but the peculiar charm lay in the manner rather than in the matter of the speech. The self-possession, the unfaltering voice, the blending of kingly gravity with suavity, were surprising in one so young. All the hearts of the bystanders—and, why should I not confess it? my own—warmed to him with ready sympathy; and something suggested to me—as, on comparing notes, I found it had done to others—the reflection, “Ce garçon ira loin.”

The Civil Governor next informed the King that everything had been made ready in our tug to convey His Majesty ashore; but the youth answered, with great tact, that he preferred availing himself of the launch and the rowers of the man-of-war which had brought

him over, a compliment to the gallant seamen valued above any gratuity that he might have vouchsafed them.

We were presently on shore. The King was received by the Cardinal, the marshals, the grandees, and the whole crowd of personages assembled under the red and yellow pavilion. A few minutes later the King rode out on his way to the city, mounted on a well-bred gray, the gift or loan of the Marquis de Dos Aguas, the great man of Valencia. He rode to the cathedral, where high mass was performed; thence he walked to the adjoining shrine of the Virgen de los Desamparados (the unprotected or forsaken), the tutelar deity of the place, where a *Salve Regina* was sung, and where, after the ceremony, the King was led to a crypt behind the main altar to kiss the hand of the miraculous image worshipped in those vaults. He was then paraded on his steed through the main street of the town—all strewn with flowers—ending his progress at the Captain-General's palace in the Plaza de Tetuan, which he had already passed on entering the town; and there he had a *levée*, which was prolonged to a late hour.

But whether on the saddle along the road, or seated on the throne on the right of the main altar in the cathedral, or walking from the metropolitan church to the Virgin's chapel, under the shadow of

the Cardinal's canopy with that prelate on his right hand, the *ci-devant* cadet at Sandhurst played his part with admirable ease and grace, and showed himself (to use a hackneyed phrase) "every inch a king," and to the manner born.

He sat and guided his horse with masterly skill, serene and perfectly collected in the midst of all that thundering artillery, of those flashing battalions, of that jangling brass from the church steeples, of that roaring, swaying, surging multitude, like a man long familiar with the world's homage, accustomed to the pomp and noise, the lofty isolation, the proud self-concentration and security of one destined to command.

The people of all classes seemed to feel the spell of that natural, inborn majesty. The crowd at the Grao, along the road, in the streets, at the church doors, everywhere, was perfectly appalling. Not only was all Valencia, with its 107,703 souls, out to greet the King, but from 25,000 to 30,000 of the country population had flocked in to catch a glimpse of him who was so little yesterday, but of whom so much was made to-day. As I stood at one of the windows of the grand saloon in the Captain-General's palace—now turned to the use of a throne-room for the levée—I looked down upon such a sea of human heads invading the Plaza de Tetuan, the broad avenues

leading to it, the promenade of the Glorieta, and the whole area within sight—I looked down on such a compact mass of eager faces as I hardly remembered having seen before, much as my experience had familiarised me with such scenes; and an English friend, who had come with Don Alfonso from Marseilles, who had been with him at Barcelona, and was very eloquent about the enthusiasm with which the King had been welcomed during his short stay in that town, assured me that the multitude here was more vast, more dense and imposing, both absolutely and relatively, quite independently of the difference in the size and population of the two cities. “The Rambla itself,” said my friend, “had nothing to compare to this swarming Plaza de Tetuan.”

Shortly after 3 o'clock p.m. there was a defile of the troops before the King, who stood on the Palace balcony, and not, as the people would have wished, mounted on his horse outside. In the evening a rather feeble attempt at illumination was made, the private houses which in the daytime had been gorgeous with flags and draperies, volunteering here and there a few dim oil-lamps and Chinese lanterns. The gas company had little to give beyond its ordinary supply, and that little was exhausted in the service of the public buildings and of a few noble houses. The only rich display

was at the Captain-General's, where the King was at dinner, and where the royal arms were shining in gas at each of the windows.

The Valencians had had a grand day. But does that mean that the people were enthusiastic in their loyalty, or that the young King had permanently won their hearts? For my own part I am disposed to despise mere popular clamour, and to think that everywhere, and especially in these southern countries, nothing is easier than to bring together a crowd from mere curiosity; and that, when they are brought together, nothing easier than to make them cry "*Viva*" or "*Muera*;" for shout they must or burst, and they are only formidable in their sullen silence. The Spanish people, who are said to be sober in their cups, are apt to be drunk with sheer joy in the happy idleness of their holidays. I suppose there was not more earnest loyal feeling in this popular demonstration in the King's honour, than there would be religious devotion in the performance of a Passion-play, or of a *Fête-Dieu* procession. It is all mere clamouring, vapouring, love of display, lightness of heart.

Emotion there certainly was; and it was wholly in favour of the youth, and, in the women's opinion, "beauty" of the new King. It, however, seemed to last as long as the spectacle which elicited it, and there was no attempt to trace it to its sources, or to

follow it to its consequences, no disposition to analyse it. Valencia "liked Don Alfonso;" that was all. But it was not sure that she loved him, or that she was ready to take him for better for worse. There is a great inert, unthinking mass of people in Spain, utterly dead to all political faith and hope, and even fear. They take the Government as it comes as a necessary evil to be dreaded and propitiated, so long as it has the power and the will to enforce obedience.

I dare say there was among all the crowd of actors and spectators in that play only one person really in earnest, and that was the young Sandhurst ex-collegian himself; for he had been strongly impressed with the gravity and difficulty of the task that was imposed upon him, and was from the depth of his heart resolved to acquit himself of it honourably, conscientiously, at least, according to his lights. Few sovereigns come to the throne in early youth, especially if they have been brought up in adversity, and with little or no expectation of reigning, without thinking that "kings are made for their people." It takes several years of use and abuse of power, and all the seduction of base court minions to flatter them into the reverse notion that "people are made for their king."

In the case of Don Alfonso, it was not the sovereign that had created his Government, it was the Govern-

ment that had produced its sovereign. In all he did, almost in all he said, the King was only the schoolboy obeying his master's—the king-maker's—behests.

Had the intelligence of the young King been on a par with the evident energy of his character, it would have been natural to expect that, upon acquiring the necessary habits of business, he would soon have resolution enough to emancipate himself from courtly trammels, act as a moderator in his council, and bend it to his own views. My opinion, hitherto only formed on a near scrutiny of his countenance, was that he had sufficient strength of mind to know when he should insist on having his own way. That opinion was confirmed by an anecdote about him, which I picked up during the King's short stay in Valencia, and of the strict authenticity of which I had satisfactory evidence.

The King and Cardinal Fernandez, Archbishop of Valencia, went down together, as I said, into the vault of the chapel dedicated to the Virgen de los Desamparados. After complying with the ceremony of kissing the hand of the statue, Don Alfonso was shown the treasury, the prelate displaying one by one the jewels, the vases, the lace and embroidery of priestly millinery, all the precious gifts by which the piety of the King's own forefathers of the Austrian and Bourbon line had enriched the holy shrine. Taking

the Cardinal's exhibition as a hint, or moved by a sudden devotional instinct, the King bewailed his poverty which prevented his emulating the munificence of his more fortunate ancestors.

"He had been many years an exile," he said; "he was himself a *desamparado* (desolate or unbefriended one), had not a *peceta* in his royal pocket—no property but what was about his person." Then, as suddenly struck with a happy thought: "But, stay! his *báton*," or little stick of *commando* (which he carried in his hand in his capacity of Captain-General or Marshal of Spain, a splendid cane tipped with gold and studded with jewels, and which was bequeathed to the exiled heir of the throne by the loyal General Calonje). "Yes, the stick would do," and, as he said, he laid the cane as his offering on the altar before the shrine.

"But," interposed the Cardinal, "your Majesty must see—you must perceive—a stick—to our Lady—is not a becoming present."

The Prince stood in suspense for one moment, and coloured; then stamped his foot firmly on the ground, and said:

"Becoming or not, the cane shall stay where it is;" and he turned on his heels and quitted the chapel without adding another word, followed by the crest-fallen Cardinal, who had no chance of further remonstrance or request.

The prelate was unwise enough to make his disappointment the theme of conversation among the King's retinue at the palace, where men of different opinions, of course, put every variety of comment on the King's behaviour. But the wisest were of opinion that it would be well for Don Alfonso if he had equally his way with the priests on all future occasions. Even this little incident, which seemed to me only remarkable as illustrating the firmness of the King's temper, was made political capital of by the retrogradist faction, who interpreted it as a desire on Don Alfonso's part "to create the Holy Virgin Captain-General of Spain;" an act, of course, which they highly approved; but which for the same reason gave great offence to the so-called "Liberals," who considered it indicative of the Prince's proneness to all the silly superstitions of his besotted mother; for by "a Liberal" in Spain men merely mean a priest-hater; by "a Conservative" simply a priest's slave; whereas Don Alfonso, as sensible men might believe, had at this juncture only shown himself a priest's master. But it may be seen from this trifling matter how thorny was the path the young sovereign had undertaken to tread, and how next to impossible it was that he should not seem either to the one or to the other of the various sets of his supporters, to be going the wrong way.

CHAPTER VI.

DON ALFONSO IN MADRID.

From Valencia to Madrid—Dangers of the route—The garden of Valencia—The Plain of Castile—Carlist havoc on the line—Albacete knives—Madrid—Preparations—The royal palace—The King's arrival—The King's progress—The sights on the Puerta del Sol—The pageantry—The crowd—The fountains—A reception—A review—Reading the King's thoughts.

DON ALFONSO left Valencia in the morning of Wednesday, January 13, 1875, and proceeded on his way to Madrid, as far as Aranjuez, where he stayed for the night. On the following Monday he quitted Aranjuez at half-past 11, and reached the Atocha station at 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

We had preceded his Majesty by twenty-four hours, acting almost as his pioneers on the road, for the Carlists mustered strong in the districts bordering on some tracts of the line of railway, and people in Madrid congratulated us on our safe arrival, as we were, without any other reason than the usual

mismanagement of everything Spanish, fully five hours and a half behind our time, and apprehensions had been entertained that we had come to grief.

We had, however, met with no accident or hindrance; for, as it was to be expected, precautions had been taken for the safe conveyance of the young King, by sending a considerable force under the orders of Marshal Count Cheste, Marques de la Pezuela, to survey the line, and place detachments of troops *en échelon* from station to station.

There was not a little in the King's route to attract his interest and supply food for reflection.

The railway from Valencia to Madrid, before it becomes one with the line from Alicante, joining at Almansa, crosses the lovely plain known as La Huerta, a check-board of rice-grounds and vegetable-gardens of unmatched fertility, which absorb nearly all the waters of the river Thuria, or Guadalaviar, leaving it a dry bed of sand and pebbles by the time it reaches Valencia. The line proceeds, coasting for a few kilomètres the lake or lagoon of Albufera, an extensive piece of water contributing neither to the beauty nor to the healthiness of the neighbourhood, and which an industrious people would long since have drained and brought into cultivation upon some plan analogous to that by which Prince Torlonia of Rome, to his eternal honour and immediate profit, turned

Lake Fucino in the Abruzzo into thousands of broad productive acres.

The ground rises after about an hour's journey, and breaks up into hills mantled with green, a paradise of orange and pomegranate groves, with the aloe, the sugar-cane, the olive, the mulberry-tree, and all that the verdure of the temperate and the warmth of the tropical zone can combine to yield, growing in matchless luxuriance to diversify the landscape.

At about 100 kilomètres from Valencia, before we reached the station of Fuente de la Higuera, we came to a tunnel, from the entrance of which we could look back on the whole extent of this Valencian Eden to the very sea-shore. We went through the tunnel, and all at once, almost by a *coup de théâtre*, the line proceeded through rugged mountain defiles, changing to the bare and dusty, treeless and houseless plain of Castile. All was freshness and life, and the rushing of wealth-yielding waters on one side; all silence and desolation, in spite of a certain slovenly cultivation and natural fertility, on the other. Nowhere could a railway which should propel the traveller at anything better than a Spanish rate of speed be a greater blessing than in this dreary Castilian wilderness, through which Madrid is reached; that vaunted "oasis in the desert"—the Park of Aranjuez—scarcely relieving its tedious monotony. For the neglect into

which that once charming royal seat had been suffered to fall was perceptible even in the few English oaks and elms with which Charles III. planted its stately avenues; squalor and decay having reached even the far-straggling monarchs of the forest which had as yet been spared by the utilitarian spirit of the age turning timber into railway sleepers.

At La Encina, before we reached Almansa, we fell in, as I said, with the line that comes up from Alicante; and farther on, at Chinchilla, was the junction with the Cartagena line, the three lines henceforward proceeding in one main trunk to Madrid. A few miles beyond the Chinchilla junction is Albacete, a town known of old for its cutlery, and a rival of the famous blades of Toledo; with this difference, however, that while the Toledo knives are warranted to cut and even, when wanted, to kill, those of Albacete, especially those which are hawked about at the station, seem only "made to sell."

All along the route, and especially from Valencia to Almansa, we could descry the tracks of the devastation inflicted on these districts by the Carlist bands. Not one of the stations which the ruthless Lozano had burnt had yet risen from the ground, and nothing could be more painful than the contrast between those blackened ruins and the gaudy flags and verdant decorations with which those good provincials had

endeavoured, diligently though not quite successfully, to mask the work of destruction. It was just as well, perhaps, that the King should be allowed to see the naked truth; that he should understand that it was not peace which his country, at least at this present crisis, expected him to bring to it, but a sword—the peace that had to be won by the sword; that he should know that, if it was without fighting, it was at least not without assuming a fighting attitude, that the King himself could travel by this any more than by any other of the King's high-roads leading to his capital.

In Madrid on our arrival we found the multitude exclusively absorbed with the thought of the morrow, and eagerly gazing at the preparations which were to enliven it as an extraordinary holiday.

The Atocha station and the church of the same name (a place, as we have seen, associated with all the auspicious events of the Spanish dynasty), and, of course, the Prado, the Calle de Alcalá, and all the streets on the King's line of progress, were already decorated with flags, draperies and streamers, with the trappings usually sported on similar occasions; indeed we could almost say that we had been moving in an atmosphere of *gold* and *gules* all the way from Valencia to Madrid. But what chiefly attracted public attention was a lofty triumphal arch

reared in the Calle de Alcala, about halfway between the Prado and the Puerta del Sol, near the Café Suizo, and on the spot where the street, which is a broad and somewhat fatiguing hill in its ascent, becomes nearly level, just as the thoroughfare sensibly narrows, and what was hitherto a grand avenue becomes a moderate-sized street.

The Prado and the Calle de Alcala, as everyone is aware, are the *Via Sacra* or *Via Triumphalis* of Madrid. Along this route in former years marched Narvaez and O'Donnell, now dead, and Espartero, lying at death's door; in later times, Serrano, and Topete, and Prim, and King Amadeo, and one after another, at a few days' interval, the revolutionary chiefs, Figueras, Salmeron, Castelar—all set up as a show for one brief hour, all flung aside one hour later, done away with, and forgotten.

To make one's way to the Atocha station at however early an hour on the 14th was not an easy task, whether one attempted to walk or ride. The troops were in motion at break of day, and many of the houses were also laying out their *colgaduras* or festive hangings at every window or balcony. Noble houses, like those of the Duke de Sesto, the Marquis de Vista-Hermosa, etc., had their family arms beautifully blasoned and embroidered on these draperies, and some had very large tapestries,

copies of Raphael's cartoons, or other classical pictures.

It was evident to me that, if on the 29th of September, 1868, the smaller dwellings showed greater alacrity to beautify themselves to celebrate the Queen's downfall, aristocratic mansions achieved this day much greater success, with much less effort, to do honour to the exaltation of the Queen's son. That was the people's fête—this, the fête of the higher and wealthier classes.

Not to fatigue the reader with descriptions which would in the main be a repetition of what I have so often witnessed and tried to picture on former occasions, I gave up the streets and availed myself of the ticket which admitted me to the Royal Palace, and went there at an early hour, before its new tenant had taken possession.

I owe this justice to the authors of the September Revolution of 1868, that, on the first success of their movement, they had put the Alcazar under strong guard, giving the command to civilised officers who should protect it from mob Vandalism, and thus save it from the fate which so often threatened the Tuileries, and to which that proud old Medici mansion succumbed at last. The result was that in the Alcazar nothing was touched or displaced ; and when I visited it a few months after the outbreak, I saw the royal apart-

ments in the very state in which they had been when the family had left for their summer residence at La Granja, the children's toys—among which this very Alfonso's hobby-horse, hoop, and kite—strewn the ground in the nursery. And in the same condition I found the apartments this forenoon (nearly seven years after that date), the very cradle of the then Prince of Asturias, all studded with precious stones, and the Order of the Golden Fleece, embroidered with gold and enamel, on the counterpane; the two portraits of the Queen's sister and her husband, the Duke of Montpensier, hanging on the walls where the confiding Queen's affection—so shamefully requited—had placed them. The unparalleled cabinet with its partitions all lined with the beautiful china of the Buen Retiro factory, was also without a speck of dust, a crack, or a scratch.

The King, upon alighting at the station, proceeded to the church of Atocha, and hence, after the *Te Deum*, rode along the Prado, and up the Alcala street, reaching the famous Puerta del Sol, or Sun's Gate, at a quarter to three in the afternoon. The multitudes had been lining both sides of the streets long before noon, treading on each other's heels with praiseworthy pertinacity, trying, to the best of their power, to frustrate the efforts of the soldiers, who, in serried ranks, endeavoured to stem the pressure,

and to keep open an avenue in the carriage-way; the people now and then breaking through that barrier—here in driblets, there in masses—only to find themselves under the hoofs of the chargers of the Civil Guards, who drove them back into the condensed quintessence of mob out of which they had just emerged.

None of the accidents usual on such occasions failed to while away the time of the expectant people; neither the dog running madly along the open gap between the two rows of people, nor the shabby old woman pushed out of the ranks by some treacherous practical joker behind her, tossed about by the soldiers, bandied about and buffeted from mob on the right to mob on the left, like a shuttle-cock, hooted and hissed, till she turns at bay, and cries out to the rabble “to kill her at once, and put her out of pain,” when protectors come forth to her rescue; the cry “Shame!” rises on all sides, and she finds a refuge somewhere, wofully rumpled and crumpled.

From my safe vantage-ground, on the balcony of the Hôtel de Paris, I saw several children, and even grown-up people, down on the ground, and their shrieks reached me where I stood; but the fallen were soon brought again to their feet, and, as far as I know, no serious accident happened, or none at least fell under the reporter’s observation.

With such petty incidents to divert our attention,

and the sight of the long line of carriages conveying deputations to the palace, and a few quips and repartees to put us in good humour, the time passed, when, without warning, either from the boom of the cannon or the chime of the church-bells (for the roar of so many voices made all else inaudible), behold "There he is!"

The royal pageantry was pointed out as it was winding its way through the Triumphal Arch in Calle Alcala. There came the inevitable half squadron of mounted Civil Guards; then a cluster of aides-de-camp; then the young King, alone, riding a handsome, gentle, milk-white charger, in the same plain uniform he wore at Valencia; the royal youth, all flushed with excitement, beaming with a joy he did not attempt to dissemble, saluting to the right and left, doffing his cap to high and low, as thunders of "*Vivas!*" rent the air, and an emotion baffling description seemed to convulse the myriads of spectators.

The King passed. After him a large staff of marshals and generals; after them rows of state carriages, alternate with squadrons of cavalry; next, flags and triumphal cars with popular devices; and last, not least, the long pent-up dense multitude, allowed to fall together and fill the broad street, like the waves of the Red Sea closing when bidden by

Moses's wand to whelm Pharaoh's host—the multitude so closely packed together that no charge of horse could possibly have made one inch of way through it all.

They passed. The pageantry came up the narrow street, up to our hotel doors—the doors out of which no man had been able to force his way for the last two hours. They went out into the wider but not less thronged *Puerta del Sol*. They crossed it in all its length, and we could follow them as they wound up the *Calle Mayor*, under other festive arches, almost to the very last stage of their progress.

It was indeed a sight; for I need not say a word about the lovely faces and elegant as well as costly costumes of the ladies crowding the balconies; about the blaze of stars and crosses on the breasts of so many marshals and generals; about the prancing steeds and glittering equipages; not a word even about what to me was the most charming sight of all, that of the gushing fountain in the centre of the *Sun's Gate*; a cluster of minor jets with a main spout in the middle, all springing up in the air, and dropping into the marble tank with a graceful curve; attaining only a moderate height in ordinary times, but on this festive occasion bursting with a sudden spurt as the King appeared, rising to a level

with the roofs of the surrounding buildings, sending their diamond spray over the thronging multitude, and glancing merrily in all the glory of a southern noon-tide sun.

They were gone ; and the streets above and below us, and the Sun's Gate, and the whole vast space before us, was one swaying and swarming mass, striving to fall asunder, and urged by various purposes into different directions, yet standing every man in his neighbour's path, in a helpless confusion, thwarting every man's will, and paralysing every man's movements.

Even when a way through the thinning groups had become practicable, it took us nearly an hour's dodging, pushing, and elbowing to go from our hotel to the palace. We arrived in time, however, to see the reception, to which all men with any pretension to distinction, military or civilian, but especially the former, were freely admitted.

The reception being over, the King again mounted his fine milk-white charger, and stood at the door of the Alcazar, as all the troops then in or about Madrid filed before him.

First came a few battalions of the Royal Cadets, probably reminding their sovereign of the little time that had elapsed since he also was mustering in the

ranks of the youths undergoing the same military apprenticeship in a foreign country ; then several battalions of infantry, of Engineers, of Civil Guards, a regiment of Pontooniers, several batteries of artillery ; then squadrons of Lancers, Hussars, and Dragoons, both the mounted artillery and the cavalry riding past at full gallop ; all shouting "*Vivas!*" to the King as they passed him with thundering voices ; the officers waving their swords high above their heads, and the flags being lowered to the ground till they swept the dust, to all which signs of homage the young King answered by raising the fingers of his right hand to his cap.

By such ceremonies was the son and heir of Isabel II. brought back to the palace which was for centuries the home of his dynasty. In that face beaming with happiness and blooming with unusual colour, as he passed our window in the Calle de Alcala, I fancied I could read something like wonder at the sight of so large a town, of so vast a population, of so great an assemblage of persons of the highest distinction, having no other object than to greet and honour a mere stripling who had left his home and his nursery little more than six years ago. "What had he done?" he seemed to ask himself, "that so much love, so much enthusiasm should be evinced in his behalf?"

But all such speculations on my part were sheer nonsense. The King in all probability found all that popular enthusiasm perfectly natural and simply his due. He who is born to rule will always take it as a matter of course that men should acknowledge him ruler.

CHAPTER VII.

DON ALFONSO'S CAMPAIGN.

The new King's position—Necessity for action—Ascendency of the army—A campaign planned—The choice of a route—Setting out—Precautions for the King's safety—The King's suite—A travelling companion—Aspect of the country—Attitude of the population—The King's behaviour—The impression he made—Objects of interest on the road—A strange adventure—A train missed: an uncomfortable journey—Dreary night-quarters.

DON ALFONSO was in his palace. He had put himself at the head of the Government. There only remained for him to undertake the command of the army.

It was the army that had re-called the dynasty from exile, and placed the King on the throne. The Spanish army is the lance of Achilles, equally inflicting and healing the wounds of the country. It was Serrano, Prim, and Topete that proclaimed the downfall of Queen Isabella's Government. It was Serrano and other courtier officers that made the ground too hot under Amadeo's feet, and determined his abdication, thereby laying open the ground for republican anarchy,

and for the utter disorganisation of the army itself. But again, it was Pavia and the army who dissolved the Cortes, and rid the country of the *bavards* of the Castelar school. And finally, it was Martinez Campos and the army that closed the era of revolution, and restored the reigning family.

As in previous movements, so in this last, it was only the army that acted everywhere, and its action was prompt, simultaneous, and apparently spontaneous. The people gave no sign of life. The upper and middle classes, who were yearning for a change, were indescribably delighted with its issue, but did nothing to second, or even to encourage it. They, as usual, seemed to think that the soldiers might best be trusted to do the job neatly and expeditiously. The well-to-do people are the persons who pay the army. They may be said to keep it to do such work, as they would keep a police to catch thieves, or a watch-dog to bark at them. The Spanish army has no foreign enemy to contend with. Unless it falls asunder and fights against itself, it can do nothing but attend to political business to make or mar.

King Alfonso and his advisers were well aware of the importance of not allowing the Spanish sword to rust for want of employment. Fortunately for them the Carlists were still in the field; Serrano had left his successors more than enough to do. His sudden

desertion of his post had spread division and confusion in his war council, and thereby inspired the enemy with fresh boldness. The overthrow of the Sagasta administration had for a few days left the country without a government, and the generals in command showed greater anxiety to aid Martinez-Campos' movement, and to turn it to the best advantage for themselves, than to watch the movements of the Carlists, or to oppose them. The expectation that the triumph of the Monarchic party would induce the Carlists to desert the Pretender and make common cause with the Alfonsists, proved to be illusory. Carlism, though hopeless of victory, showed no sign of collapsing. It remained as a stubborn fact; a hard nut to crack. Bands of Carlist cavalry were still hovering about Valencia at half-an-hour's ride from the city when Don Alfonso was about to set out for Madrid.

But even before the King set out for his capital, it had been settled that, on arriving, he should not tarry there, but proceed at once to the north. His journey to the north was, however, postponed for twelve days, owing either to irresolution in the Government's council, or to difficulties in the choice of a route. It was first deemed advisable that the young monarch should travel by the Northern line—*via* the Escorial, Avila, Burgos, Vittoria—staying for a night at the Escorial to pray and meditate within the vaults enclosing his

ancestor's mortal remains. But the Carlists stood on the way all across the Northern route, and the King had no forces wherewith he could break through their ranks so as to reach his own army of the north. It was therefore decided that he should join that army by the north-eastern line from Madrid to Saragossa, which was comparatively safe, though there also the Carlist chief Lissaraga had just shot a railway and telegraph clerk at Calatayud, letting off the station-master and the rest by "a great stretch of clemency," but threatening with instant execution as many of the officials as he might find at work on the line, as by a convention between the belligerents the line was not to be used for military or intelligence purposes.

Yet the King insisted on travelling on that line, either because he had no choice, or because he had given his royal word to the people at Saragossa, and he would not disappoint them.

The hour mentioned for the King's departure was seven in the morning of January 19th, 1875. But Don Alfonso was young; he had been harassed for the last five days with endless festivities, and it was no wonder if he showed some reluctance to quit his warm bed before daylight. An hour and a quarter after the appointed time Don Alfonso made his appearance at the Atocha station, followed by a crowd of marshals, generals, etc., who had assembled to bid him a *bonne*

campagne, at the handsomely decorated waiting-room and on the platform.

The King walked up the steps of his superb state saloon-carriage, then turned, and stood, looking back, as if half-dismayed by the solitude that inhabited it, and beckoned to those gentlemen in the crowd whose company he desired. These were some of his generals and aides-de-camp, the Minister of War, Jovellar, the Captain-General of Madrid, Primo de Rivera, and others, among whom was conspicuous the handsome and stately figure of the Banker-Prince, the Marquis Salamanca. In a few seconds the members of the numerous suite were at their places in their respective compartments; the Royal March gave the signal; there was a thundering parting "*Viva!*" and the train started.

I was travelling on this occasion with Mr. George Augustus Sala, a companion as charming in his talk as he is in his best writings; and we had both been accommodated in the private saloon-carriage of the Marquis of Salamanca, in the closest proximity to that of the King. We were thus in constant contact with the aides-de-camp, who carried their courtesy so far as to request our company in the King's own carriage at breakfast-time. These gentlemen, Señores Saavedra, Montesinos, Trillo-Figueroa, and Mirasol, were patterns of thoroughly educated Spaniards,

fully justifying the choice of those who had placed them so near the King's person.

The route from Madrid to Saragossa lies across a country unique in the world for wild picturesqueness, devoid of beauty, though not of interest. We travelled through Castile to Alcala, Guadalajara, and Sigüenza, as far as Aviza, where the road enters Aragon, proceeding through this kingdom as far as Saragossa. On the first day, however, the King's journey ended at the second station after Aviza, Alhama, an old Moorish bathing-place, as the name denotes, like the other Alhama in the kingdom of Granada, the loss of which cost such deep sighs to the Moorish king in the ballad.

The King had seen nothing but splendid weather since he first landed on Spanish soil. A cold white fog, however, had set in at Madrid as he started, but it yielded before the earliest sun-rays. The day was again bright, and the temperature enjoyable, though wintry enough to make walking and riding preferable to sitting still.

The King, as I said, had chosen this route, partly because there was no better, partly also because he disdained to show fear, and wished to prove to the Carlists the little account in which he held them. This recklessness of risk on the part of the Sovereign imposed double caution on the Government. A large

force of infantry travelled with us in the front and back carriages of the royal train, and two other trains, also laden with troops, preceded and followed us in our van and rear. Along the line, now on our right, now on our left, cavalry soldiers or mounted Civil Guards were picketed. These pranced gallantly across the fields, and came up as the train approached, reining in their steeds, and looking trim and neat in their glittering uniforms. For a considerable distance from the capital this escort was rather ornamental than useful, for the region round Madrid is bare and flat, treeless and desolate, so that the eye can scan it for many miles round. But, as we advanced beyond Guadalajara, and went through rocky gorges hemmed in by deep cuttings, or buried in dark tunnels, our protectors were lost to view, though we were satisfied that they were lining the overhanging heights, and had thoroughly searched every lurking-place where an enemy might lie in ambush. All the stations, and in some places also the cantoniers' houses, were garrisoned with soldiers, who turned out to salute, their trumpets or bands cheering us all along our line of progress. Notwithstanding all this care that was taken of us, the persons on whom lay the responsibility of the King's safety felt and betrayed the greatest uneasiness; and it was at their suggestion that the journey was divided

into two days, to prevent any mishap contingent on a late arrival, and to avoid the necessity of travelling in the dark.

Apart from these apprehensions, which only weighed on a few of us, the King's journey was successful beyond expectation. The whole population was stirred by an intense curiosity to see its new Sovereign, and it thronged upon him at all stations, the very labourers in the distant fields leaving their ploughs and horses, and running up to the line, waving their caps in the air, and huzzaing to the top of their voices. At the stations the animation was great; but the crowds were at first somewhat bashful; they were awed by the glittering arms and uniforms of the King's pageantry, and seemed doubtful whether shouting or clapping of hands would be becoming in folks of their humble station, and whether their thronging in among their betters might not be considered obtrusive or presumptuous. The sight of the young royal face, however, at once dispelled all their shyness. They were won by that gracious and ingenuous smile, emboldened by the condescending salute, and they pressed forward, the women with a "Mira que bonito!" (See how pretty he is!) mothers lifting up their babies in arms, and the men breaking through the soldiers' ranks tumultuously, so that it was with difficulty they could be kept off the steps of the royal carriage, and

prevented from hugging the object of their idolatry, and stifling him in their frantic love.

All this was at merely rural stations, where barely a few seconds were allowed for the people's gratification. At such places as Alcala or Guadalajara, Sigüenza or Calatayud, where the stay was longer, the platform was beset with a well-dressed multitude. Municipal deputations, the clergy headed by their bishops, and all the notables turned out; and addresses were spoken, only a few words of which, in the din of martial strains and the irrepressible cheers of the people, could have a chance of reaching the ears for which they were intended.

Together with the regular troops, battalions of provincial militia, "Volunteers of Freedom," as they were called, the outcome of the revolution, were mustered in *bourgeois* costume—a motley crew of ragamuffins; and these were not the least demonstrative in their loyalty; though many of them, only a few days before, were known for their extreme democratic propensities, and went by a name indicative of their sympathy with the Ultra-Republicans and *Intransigentes*.

There was nothing not perfectly natural in all this. A populace is always the same many-headed animal at all junctures, and in every country. The wonder to me lay in the peculiar fascination the young King's presence seemed to work on the multitude, whose excitement only broke out, not before, but *after* they

had seen him, and was therefore wrought not by his rank but by his person. Nothing more striking than the change those animated countenances underwent, from the eager yet vacant curiosity with which they approached to the genuine interest they expressed when they came within actual sight of the King. They had seen him, and evidently approved of him.

I suppose there is a charm in the mere youth of a performer, whether the play is going on before the crowded pit of a theatre, or in real life and on the stage of the world. The royal youth standing before those rustics, so smiling and condescending, so apparently mild and benignant, was in their eyes a very infant prodigy of a King. It would seem as if the nation, which had so long been in search of a ruler, had at once recognised its true master by instinct. This poor Spain, a drowning wretch, was catching at this mere straw of a monarch. A youth of seventeen could not do much for his people; but what could not the people do by its mere faith in and worship of that youth? The old country seemed to see itself rejuvenised in its King.

That, at his time of life, Don Alfonso had much to learn there could be no doubt. But his subjects seemed to take him for a ready-made king. And he showed tact enough to have his lesson well by heart when the time came to say it. He kept his

proficiency on a par with every exigency. His mind seemed to work by instinct. The right words always occurred to him at the right moment. Truly it may be said of our age, with respect both to kings and their subjects, "*Il n'y a plus d'enfants.*"

A journey from Madrid to Saragossa, like the one from Madrid to Valencia, could not fail to be pregnant with instruction to Don Alfonso, even though the view from a railway-carriage window, and with a population in its Sunday best, must be as cursory and, so to say, as illusory, as a series of kaleidoscopic pictures. The region we traversed was, as I said, somewhat destitute of interest. The land is apparently barren, but really as fertile as it is in at least three-fourths of the area of the Peninsula. An arid, dusty, dreary waste; one-fourth of the available soil at this season recently ploughed; three-fourths lying fallow; a vast extent unimproved or unimprovable, bare rock or marsh, or sandy and stony desert, with hardly one lonely, ragged tree left uncut, and hardly a solitary farm or country-house, or even isolated hovel in sight. All the people here are townspeople, and, with the exception of the few labourers in the field, they all come down from towns or villages perched on the hills, or pent up within tottering walls and dried-up moats—fortified abodes, where the very churches have loopholes and battlements for warlike purposes—indicative

of a community in which public security has made no advance from what it was in those dark ages in which every man had to fight or pay for dear life.

Of all the towns we passed the guide-book had only one tale to tell: the contrast of what they were with what they are. There is no real decay; there is, on the contrary, a considerable progress in Spain, taking all in all. In large cities the increase of the population and of their well-being is satisfactory. But the minor towns do not keep pace with the growth of their larger sisters. Indeed, the former dwindle in the same measure as the latter expands. Alcala de Henares is the mere ghost of a town since its university was removed to Madrid. It barely lives by the school for cavalry officers the Government established there, as Guadalajara, though the capital of a province, owes the little life it exhibits to its college for military engineers. Even more desperately dull and forsaken are Siguenza, Calatayud, and the other places on this route.

But gloomy and spectral as they may look, most of these towns have an imposing and not unpleasant appearance from a distance, as they look down on the traveller from the vantage-ground of their elevated position, all crowded with the domes and towers of stately buildings; palaces where kings lived and reigned; churches where their generations, with the

great men who illustrated their times, were baptized and buried. Was not yon world-forsaken Alcala de Henares the birth-place of Cervantes and of our own Queen Catherine of Aragon? And lived not there Cardinal Ximenes, or Cisneros, the Spanish Wolsey, and the founder on this very spot of a Spanish Eton, now no more?

At Siguenza our journey—*i.e.*, that of Mr. Sala and myself—came to a sudden and rather serious interruption.

The stoppage at that station, and the interchange of civilities between His Majesty and the magnates of the locality had already lasted several minutes, when an old-fashioned, lumbering coach, drawn by four black horses, with a grand coachman and footmen in liveries, and green tassels on the horses' heads, drove up to the train as it stood still in the open, and his lordship the Bishop, or Archbishop of Siguenza, a middle-aged prelate, very sour and austere in look, alighted, and stepped up to the window of the carriage where the King had risen to receive him. A rather lengthy harangue was delivered by the Monsignore; it was answered in a few words by the King, after which the two engaged in a more familiar talk in a tone a little above a whisper, and which, judging from its earnestness, seemed likely to have no end.

Mr. Sala and I had stepped down from our carriage

to stretch our limbs, and, as we stood as near to the scene of the interview as discretion warranted, we allowed ourselves a few running comments on the Bishop's looks, on his flowing garments, on his ponderous antediluvian conveyance, and his coachman's wig, when, all at once, the confabulation between the two exalted personages came to an end; the Bishop made a deep bow, the King waved his hand, and—and the train began to assume a slow, almost imperceptible forward motion. There was no bell or whistle to give the signal of starting; for Court etiquette forbids this in Spain, the movements of a royal train being regulated by the King's nod. But as we looked before us we perceived that all our fellow-travellers had, during our quizzing inspection of the episcopal vehicle, taken their places. The train was soon off at a good speed. There was a momentary hesitation on our part about the indecency of rushing to the King's saloon carriage as if taking it by storm; we thought instinctively that we might get up into one of the following compartments, but, while we thought, the train went its way; all the doors were shut; the last luggage-van passed, and we were left on the spot, with open mouths, and looking one another helplessly in the face.

"Gallenga?"

"Sala!"

"It seems we are left behind?"

"Dropped, by Jupiter!"

"Bah! the train is only being shunted. It will be back in a minute."

But the minute passed, and there we were, all alone and forsaken. The Bishop and his coach were jogging townwards; the people were gone or going; a very few of them barely deigning to stop and look at two plain men in black, after seeing so many smart uniforms; some of them with a leer in their countenances, evidently guessing our predicament, and finding our adventure uncommonly amusing, whilst we looked very foolish, and, at first, unable to take in all the awkwardness of our position.

What was to be done? We were all in black, in our evening-dress, and had left our great-coats and wrappers in the railway-carriage, as useless for a minute's stoppage. It was January, and the wind from the mountains was keen enough to remind us that that month is winter even in Spain. We had breakfasted in the King's carriage; but lunch-time had come, and no doubt our fellow-travellers were at that very moment falling to, with their appetite whetted by the sharp mountain air. Buffets or waiting-rooms at Sigüenza were out of the question. We looked at the town, on a steep hill, at least two miles off, and we thought of Spanish country inns, their

beds, their fare, their wines. We turned to the few remaining bystanders, for assistance, for advice, for sympathy; of the last we had as much as we wanted. But, as to any help or counsel, we might as well have applied to one of the Bishop's black horses.

It occurred to us that the escort train in the rear would soon come up; and up it soon came, of course. But it had nothing to say to the local municipal or ecclesiastical authorities. It dashed past the station at a pace inspired by the fear of lagging too far behind, and never saw the signals by which we tried to stop it, nor would it probably have heeded even if it had seen them.

Our disappointment and vexation happily prevented our feeling either the hunger or cold that were rapidly gaining upon us. All our anxiety was to get on, to be sure to reach Alhama before night. There was, we were told, no coach on the road, no fly or hackney carriage in the town—nothing but the Bishop's state coach, and that could only travel at a bullock's pace; and to walk over the distance was out of the question.

Luckily, all at once it occurred to one of the townsmen, still lingering with us, that the ordinary train "might chance to come up." The thing was uncertain, as the journey of the King and suite might interfere with its movements. It was a slow

train; it had no particular hours for arriving or starting. It might be here in a few minutes; it might not be here at all. "*Quien sabe?*" We dared not hope, we dared not move. There we were waiting, stamping our feet now and then to keep ourselves warm, my friend Sala cracking his jokes, bidding me "Never say die," assuring me that we should certainly sup with the King that same evening.

And the evening came, and with it the slow train; but very slow, distressingly slow; so much so that it was long past ten in the evening when it stopped, and the guard cried, "Alhama!"

At Alhama the King was making his first experiment of hotel life in his country.

Alhama consists of a village of no great pretensions, with an inn large enough for the accommodation of visitors in the bathing season. In this huge barrack-like caravanserai, at this time of the year untenanted and only half furnished, the King was welcomed by the municipal authorities of the place. The inn, with something like management, would easily have afforded room for any other king's suite. But Spanish kings, proverbially, travel with a nation for a retinue, and King Alfonso had been too short a time at the Alcazar to inquire into the organisation and economy of his royal household. Whatever his progress from Paris to Marseilles and hence to Barcelona, Valencia, and

Madrid may have cost him, there is no doubt that these first days' journey to the north must have proved terribly expensive. Almost any person at a loss for travelling means seemed to find his way into some of the carriages of the King's train.

At Alhama, on the King's arrival, in the evening, the large dining-rooms on the ground-floor were invaded by a perfect mob. Officers of rank in the King's suite had to fight their way or to wait for a seat at the tables, and when at last room was made for them, the too scanty provisions had all been used up, and there was nothing left for them to eat. The same as to sleeping accommodation. All the best rooms and beds had fallen a prey to the least deserving ; for the persons of the highest rank and character, there was in many instances no place where to lay their head.

Besides these well or ill-dressed parasites, a crowd of ragged lazaroni-like idlers and loafers beset the large halls and long corridors of the hotel, determined, apparently, not so much to sponge upon the King, or to pick up the crumbs under his table, as simply to squat down and cumber the ground, exercising the right that the poor has at the rich man's door among those Asiatic or African nations, from whom the Spaniard disdains to claim descent, yet whose manners

and customs he unconsciously maintains in all their primitiveness.

How we fared in the midst of all that throng and hubbub, may be easily imagined.

The King and our friends of his suite were lodged in a suite of rooms on the upper floor, with such comfort as could be procured, but with a strong guard at the doors, and "not at home to the Pope himself." Our good patron, Salamanca, was staying at one of his villas six or seven miles out of town. There was no one to know, or to listen to us. We made the tour of the crowded building, went in at one door and out at the other, everywhere repulsed, then back to the station, where all was shut up, all dark and silent, a mass of people lying *pêle-mêle* sound asleep on the ground—in the waiting-rooms, on the platform, on the rails, anywhere and everywhere. We made some feeble and vain attempts to get at our wrappers and carpet-bags left in the saloon-carriage, and at last gave up everything in despair, crept into an empty luggage-van, the lock of which was providentially broken, and there we sat or lay on the bare boards, lightly clad, dinnerless and supperless, awaiting the still distant morning, and declaring that our royal campaign did not open under the most favourable auspices.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON A FOOL'S ERRAND.

Don Alfonso in Saragossa—Unexpected tidings—A sudden resolution—A hurried journey—Saragossa to Barcelona—Barcelona to Perpignan—A Catalan railway—A Catalan diligence—Catalan fellow-travellers—The Catalonian sea-coast—The scenery—Gerona—Its theatre—The cathedral by night—The frontier—Beauties of the passport system—From Perpignan to Rome—The hoax—Back to Spain.

THE royal campaign, by a strange chance, was destined to come to a speedy end for me. We made a rather late start from Alhama, on the 20th, at nine in the morning, and arrived at Saragossa at four in the afternoon. The town, which had had more leisure for preparation than those hitherto visited by Don Alfonso, had outdone all others, not only in the profusion of triumphal arches and tasteful decorations, but also—what was of more moment for us—in the supply of good accommodation in its hotels and private houses. At the railway terminus the King was received by

the municipal deputation, headed by the Mayor with the golden key of the city on a crimson velvet box. The King's horse, a fine tall gray, was waiting at the outside door of the station. Don Alfonso vaulted into the saddle and rode into the town by the handsome paseo, and into the great square, whence, crossing the Coso, or Corso, he went through another broad new street to the cathedral, or new Seo, the huge modern high-domed church of the wonder-working "Virgen del Pilar." There we left him, not much caring to ascertain whether from it he would proceed to the old Seo, the dark Gothic metropolitan church (for Saragossa, like some other Spanish towns, has two cathedrals, while the capital, Madrid, has none) or whether he had at once gone to the Archbishop's palace for a rest of which he was in need, so as to be ready for the illumination, and the gala performance at the theatre.

Anxious above all things to take care of our own comforts, Mr. Sala and myself looked out for the hotel where rooms had been bespoken for us, and made ourselves at home in it. Here, however, a visitor was soon announced. Our friend, the banker Salamanca, had stopped at his villa at Alhama; but Señor Saavedra, a gentleman connected with the marquis by marriage, was on the look out for us, and on being admitted, he announced himself the bearer

of "important—he could not say whether sad or joyful—news for us."

"A telegram," he continued, "had been received by his uncle, Salamanca, from Madrid, addressed to him, but intended for one of us, by the editor of the *Times*, announcing that private intelligence had reached London to the effect that the old Pope Pius IX. was seriously ill and not expected to live." The telegram of course concerned me; for there was a distinct understanding between the *Times* and myself that in any such contingency as the Pope's death, I should instantly leave anything I might have on hand in Spain or anywhere else, and proceed post-haste to Rome to be present at His Holiness's funeral and the ensuing conclave.

I did not allow myself one minute for reflection; I had only three or four hours to pack up and order dinner so as to be ready for the night-train to Barcelona. In a few words I began to bid good-bye to my travelling companion; but, somewhat to my surprise, he broke out with great animation: "Barcelona, is it? My dear sir, I'll go with you."

"Delighted, I am sure," I answered. "But the King, the war——"

"Oh, hang the war! We had enough of it last night. I want to see Barcelona, that curious place, where Alfred de Musset found his 'Andalouse.' I

do not much care for wars ; nor am I sure I have any particular wish to attend a conclave. But if you are for Barcelona, so am I."

There was nothing more to be said ; we rang for dinner ; dinner was served ; not a bad one for a Spanish inn ; when my fellow-traveller turned his chair to the fire, stretched his legs to their full length, poured out a glass of Val de Peñas, and, while he sipped it, he philosophised in his own lazy manner.

"On second thoughts," he said, "I think the Pope will keep. No good ever came of being in a hurry. We had a terrible night last night. A good bed would do us good. I am sure it will to me. '*Mañana*,' says the Spaniard. Cannot I persuade you to put off your journey till to-morrow?"

"Not for the world," said I.

"Then," he said, "I'll tell you what. You start to-night ; I'll be sure to follow."

We shook hands, and I got into the omnibus that took me to the station. On the following morning at an early hour, I was in Barcelona.

From Barcelona to Perpignan, *viâ* Gerona, the distance is 114 miles. The guide-books, published in 1868, described this route as practicable "by railway throughout," adding that the line was to be "immediately completed." The railway, however, or

railways (for there was an inland and a sea-coast line), had not at that time been carried beyond Gerona, a distance of 67 miles ; and, since then, not only had not the remaining 47 miles to Perpignan been accomplished, but the line to Gerona had been abandoned, the trains at this time (January, 1875) going no farther than Matarò—one hour from Barcelona.

We left Barcelona by omnibus at six in the morning, but it was nearly seven by the time we and our impediments were stowed away in our respective places, and the train started for Matarò.

Day was dawning on the sea on our right ; a fine day, as is rather the rule than the exception in these happy latitudes. The first rosy tints of the morning danced on the dark and sullen waves, still vexed by the keen night breeze, as they broke at our feet on the shore, and sent their spray fresh and fragrant into our faces, lulling us by their monotonous roar into ineffable comfort, suggestive of the old poet's saying about the sweet contrast between looking at the sea from the shore and being tossed in a boat upon it. The road and railroad to Matarò proceed side by side, close to the sea, nothing but a thin fringe of aloe separating them from the water's edge.

On our left were fields and gardens, and long rows of habitations, one straggling village following

upon another, mere suburbs of thrifty Barcelona, the tall chimneys of hundreds of factories rising between us and the hills, and the train stopping at every petty station at two or three kilomètres distance, to take up or let down swarms of operatives bound on their daily task.

At Matarò the *diligence* awaited us—a ponderous, shaky old vehicle in three compartments, and drawn by five tall, lank, but wiry horses, two as wheelers, and three leaders, after the old French fashion, and, indeed, altogether a second-hand and cast-off French contrivance, as everything connected with locomotion or accommodation on the road usually is, and must probably for ever be, in Spain—French, and bad of its kind.

Our progress was still for several hours along the shore. The day was warm; we had sun as in May, dust as in July; our gallant cattle floundered over what was here and there half road, half beach, the bells about their necks ringing melodiously, and our Catalan fellow-travellers jabbering away with their habitual exuberance of animal spirits; enhanced at this moment by the freshness of the morning, and by the first sensation of locomotion.

I had two young bagmen from Sabadell in the *intérieur* with me, two middle-aged women, and a younger one with a child in arms for my *vis-à-vis*;

and the peals of laughter which followed upon their incessant jokes would have enlivened the dullest traveller, even had his knowledge of their *patois* enabled him to make out the grossness of some of their allusions, and to perceive that the pleasantry was in a great measure at his expense. The road was not remarkably interesting. The shore was flat for many miles, and, as we advanced round the skirts of the hills, the signs of human habitation and cultivation diminished, and the landscape resumed that blank, brown look, which gives so much meaning to Shakespeare's oft repeated, true, and picturesque appellation of "tawny Spain." The olive sprouted from the rocky and sandy soil here and there, and near the villages we came upon a few stunted orange shrubberies; but even here, in Catalonia, the husbandry seemed slothful and slovenly; and what we saw of the dwellings alongside the road, betokened, on the part of the inhabitants, no little indifference to the comforts and decencies of life. The road itself was not bad, but it had no bridges over many of the streams, and some of these, though shallow, were dammed up by the beach into such deep quagmires of sand and mud, that the able-bodied part of the travelling community had to alight and walk, to enable the ark-like conveyance to be lugged through,

with much cracking of whips, and shouts and oaths of the driver, conductor, and helpers.

Matters were here in Catalonia pretty much as they were in Calabria or Basilicata at the time Garibaldi called those benighted provinces of the old Bourbon kingdom to a new life. The olive grounds near the villages, the fig-tree growing at every cottage door, the cork-tree, the evergreen oak and umbrella pine here and there crowning the hill-tops, gave this part of the Iberian Peninsula a peculiarly Italian look, and the resemblance was enhanced by the popular costume—the scarlet caps of the men, the handkerchiefs round the faces and throats of the women, and by their dialect, which, utterly unintelligible as it would be to a sub-Alpine, would sound to him perfectly familiar and home-like.

We breakfasted on the first day at Camellas at noon, and reached Gerona at nightfall.

Gerona may well be called in every respect the last town of Spain. Such as it was 50 or perhaps 150 years before, it remained still at the time of my visit. Houses were propped up by flying buttresses, or, as it were, wedded to one another by huge beams joining them like Siamese twins across the narrow streets, and they thus seemed to bear up together against time, equally defying decay and improve-

ment; while the people evinced utter disdain of those niceties and proprieties into which even the most backward and reckless among the Latin races have lately been in some measure shamed.

It was a festive day in Gerona—(when is it not a *fiesta* in Spain?) It was the King's day, St. Alfonso, and the town had made puny efforts to swathe itself in loyal draperies; and there was, as we drove in, some attempt at illumination. The whole population was in the streets; three soldiers to every citizen; and the shrill trumpets blew endless and apparently meaningless, signals; two or three bands paraded the main thoroughfares with lively marches, in which the monotonous thumping of the big drum drowned the notes of all other instruments; there was a glare at the café before the theatre, and a blaze from the windows of the Governor's palace; and the citizen's wives, in hood and mantle, were trooping to the play-house, on the door of which we read the title of the evening's performance: "*Los Infiernos de Madrid*" (The Madrid Hells).

We went on to the upper town, the Cathedral Close, a quarter all in darkness, the Bishop and his clergy sulking in the shade of their old towers; not one soul disturbing the solitude of the grand and stately moon-lit flight of steps leading up to the old minster; for these priests' devotion, had they had their way,

would have been, not to St. Alfonso, but to St. Carlos; their sympathies were all with the Carlists; the young King whom they were bidden to acknowledge being at the utmost a *pis-aller* to which they were not yet heartily reconciled.

We left Gerona on Sunday morning at 7, and went across a broad plain, with the range of the Pyrenees looming in sight. Gerona is an inland town, and the road which diverges from the sea-shore long before reaching that place, strikes more and more inwardly, making for a gap or depression in the mountains between the main chain on the left, and the mass ending at Cape Creux, near Rosas, on the right.

At Figueras, the great frontier stronghold of Spain on this side, we breakfasted; and here we were still in the plain. But after this the spurs of low hills draw nearer the road on either side of us, and the ground was slightly undulated. Real climbing, however, there was none, and we reached the boundary landmark at Le Pertuis without once slackening our horses' paces. Something like uphill work awaited us on the French side, but it was neither very hard nor very long; and as we went from the southern to the northern watershed—from Spain into France—we might well say, "*Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées.*"

Something grand and beautiful there was in this narrow, as well as low, mountain-gorge, nevertheless.

The valleys and hill-sides were densely wooded, and as we looked down upon them from the high-road, they sank down to a depth which gave them all the magnificence of the unknown and inscrutable.

At Le Pertuis, my two fellow-travellers, the bagmen from Sabadell, got into some difficulty with M. le Commissaire de Police, a young gentleman dressed in the pink of Parisian fashion with tall silk hat, kid gloves, and ivory-tipped cane, as in these refined times beseeemed a Sansculotte functionary, who found that their passports were not *en règle*, and sent them back for a *visé* of a French consul, to Rosas, Gerona, or wherever one could be found; and thus caused them to miss the train at Perpignan, and eventually to lose twenty-four hours on their journey.

The hardship of their case lay in this, that Spain, though at war, asked no passports, and it was France, and France alone, that took charge of the police on this side of the frontier, as it did at Hendaye. Her vigilance was thus exercised on behalf of Spain, but it was at the Spaniard's expense. Thanks to his *Civis Romanus* privilege, an Englishman breaks through those trammels as a swift through cobwebs; but a Frenchman sticks to his stupid old nuisance, in spite of its well demonstrated uselessness. Reason with him as you may, his conclusion is always: "C'est égal: le Français aime son passeport." It is an

instrument of torture, and he likes to use it. Were St. Peter a Frenchman he would call for "Vos papiers, Messieurs et Dames" at the gate of Paradise.

We had still three hours dreary driving from Le Pertuis to Perpignan, where we arrived at five in the evening, in time for the night train to Marseilles. We arrived at Marseilles at midnight, and crept along the French sea-coast line for the remaining hours of that night and the following day.

On Tuesday evening, after five, I reached the Italian frontier stream of the Roya, at Ventimiglia; and starting after a brief delay, I travelled along the Riviera to Genoa, and hence by Spezia, Pisa, and Civitavecchia, I was brought to the Roman station at Piazza di Termini, the train coming up to the platform at 2.45 p.m., punctual to half a minute.

From the Pyrenees to the Alps, and from the Alps to the Tiber, there was only a forty-four hours' journey, a journey which, with a little good-will on the part of France, and some slight improvement in the Italian arrangements, might have been reduced to thirty-six hours.

At every post-house and station on my progress I had laid hands on any odd number of a newspaper I could find, anxiously looking for recent tidings of that poor Pope, whose agony I scarcely hoped could be prolonged till my arrival. On alighting at Rome,

however, and hastening for intelligence to the *Fanfulla* office, my inquiries were met with a Homeric chorus of laughter by the whole staff of that journal; for the Pope was neither dead nor dying, nor had been ailing of late; his health never having been better; for His Holiness had got rid even of those epileptic fits, which had been the bane of his existence, and began to flatter himself that the divine gift of infallibility involved the privilege of immortality.

“A hoax! a practical joke! The *Times* correspondent sent on a fool’s errand!” The news made the tour of all Roman circles, and, I was told, reached the Pope himself, who did not laugh at it, for he would not believe the affair was the result of a *mauvaise plaisanterie*, but attributed it to the malice of his enemies, “whose wish was father to the thought, but whom he was determined to disappoint to the last.”

Even so. It was a hoax! by whom played, or for what purpose, I am yet to learn. It did the Pope little harm, and none to me, besides the loss of time and of a few hundred francs of travelling expense.

I waited till I could put myself into postal communication with the *Times*; and having ascertained that they had never sent me a telegram, and never received any intelligence of the Pope’s alleged illness,

I tried very hard to laugh at the adventure, at which it would have been useless to storm, and travelled back by rail to Marseilles, whence one of the French *Messageries Maritimes* landed me safe and sound. at Barcelona, after about a couple of weeks' absence.

CHAPTER IX.

DON ALFONSO'S GOVERNMENT.

The King's position after his unsuccessful campaign—Wane of his popularity—Falling off of public confidence—Carlist ravages—Desolation and insecurity of the country—The Ministry—The Opposition—The Serrano party—Hopelessness of all attempts at coalition—Prevalence of the reactionary party—The priests—The ex-Queen and her family—A glimpse of a better future.

I MADE only a short stay in Barcelona, and travelled back to Madrid to be in time for the King's return from his campaign.

Don Alfonso had left for the north on the 19th of January, 1875. He re-entered his capital on Saturday, February 13th, at half-past two in the afternoon.

His campaign in the north had been disastrous. Success, indeed, crowned its earliest operations. The Carlists fell back from all their positions before beleaguered Pamplona, where the young King made his triumphal entry. But subsequently the blundering of his generals and panic among some of his troops led

to the defeats of Lacar and Lorca, and Don Alfonso, who, carried away by a natural juvenile ardour, had run considerable personal risk, was obliged to listen to the advice of his ministers, who urged the necessity of the King's presence at the seat of Government, and he took his way back to Madrid.

Those twenty-six days of the King's absence had wrought a considerable change in the state of public affairs and in the disposition of the popular mind. At the time of the King's departure the little that had been seen of him and all that was reported of his sayings and doings had encircled his brow with a kind of aureole, and invested him with a prestige which seemed to designate him, a mere lad of seventeen, as a kind of Heavenly messenger, a miraculous being chosen by Providence as the instrument by which the wounds of the country were to be healed, and peace, order, and freedom to be restored.

The delusion was kept up as long as it was possible. In those encounters where Don Alfonso had a narrow escape of falling into the hands of the enemy, he had gained the credit of behaving with cool intrepidity: and the veteran, Espartero, with whom the King had sought an interview at Logroño, reminded him that he was "the first King who had shown his face to an enemy since the days of Philip V.," on the strength of which the old general decorated his

Sovereign with his own long-worn insignia of the Order of St. Fernando.

But now the King had withdrawn from the field, and with him came the news of the failure of his army's enterprise. Public opinion, which had been for several days unreasonably elated, was now labouring under a fit of equally irrational depression.

The Carlists, it was evident, were not to be put down in a hurry either by peaceful negotiation or by strenuous warlike exertion. There was to be a postponement (*plazamiento*) in the realisation of the people's too sanguine expectations. Confidence in those troops which had been described as *inmejorables*, or perfect beyond all possibility of further improvement, was greatly shaken. Doubts were entertained not only as to their efficiency, but as to their numbers being sufficient, and a decree had gone forth for a new *quinta*, or draught of 70,000 men.

In the meanwhile the Carlist bands, some of them formidable by their numbers, and led by daring chiefs, scoured all the districts of Catalonia, Lower Aragon, and Valencia; they levied contributions where they met with no resistance, and committed great enormities where their demands were not instantly complied with. They burnt railway-stations, shot the station-masters, tore up the rails, fired into the trains, and interrupted all postal and telegraphic communications with such

effect, as to give rise to serious fears lest all the high-ways to France by land might have to be abandoned.

Under these inauspicious circumstances, King Alfonso had now to take up the reins of his Government. He had to deal with an incurable dualism in his Cabinet. All the efforts of the President of the Council, Canovas del Castillo, to effect a *bond fide* reconciliation between the "Moderados" and the "Unionists"—so-called "Conservatives" and "Liberals"—had hitherto proved unavailing, and allowed little hope that the King's personal influence might succeed where the adroitness of his Prime Minister had failed.

The chance was now supposed to lie in a combination of Canovas and his Liberal colleagues with Serrano and the other members of the late republican administration, some persons even pointing to Sagasta, as the able man who was alone equal to confront the grave emergencies of the situation.

The time for these worthies had, however, not yet come. Their conduct towards the close of their year's tenure of office had been marked by unpardonable inconsistencies and timidity. On the 30th of December, 1874, when the first tidings of Martinez Campos' proclamation of Alfonso II. reached Madrid, the chief agent of that scheme of a Bourbon restoration, General Primo de Rivera, Captain-General of New Castile, and Military Governor of the Capital, intimated to Sagasta

that it was in his, Sagasta's, power and in that of Serrano to second the movement, and even to put themselves at its head. Sagasta communicated by telegraph with Serrano, who was then in command at Logroño, laying before him the alternative between accepting Primo de Rivera's proposals, and marching at once upon Madrid with such force as might overpower the Captain-General, and control the half-mutinous garrison of the capital.

Serrano was not equal to either resolution. He either thought that in a restored Monarchy he could not maintain the supreme rank he now held at the head of a mock Republic, or he feared that the Bourbons would never forgive the defection by which he had requited their boundless liberality to him, and though at heart a Royalist, he would not declare for the new King. On the other hand, he did not know how far he could rely on his troops, and durst not lead them against their comrades. In this perplexity he was seized by an unaccountable panic, and sought his safety in an undignified flight across the Pyrenees, whilst his wife, by the advice of Her Majesty's Minister (Mr. Layard), took refuge in the palace of the British Legation, whence she was smuggled away in the night to Portugal.

Serrano, however, soon recovered from his groundless fears, and came back to Spain, where his late

colleague, Sagasta, had remained unmolested. This was not the first time that Serrano had betaken himself to flight where there was none to pursue, and had come back from his self-imposed banishment more than ever the master of the situation. He was one of those rare men who have the knack of always falling on their feet. His genial manners, his good-nature and amiability had enabled him to go through life with many friends, and not one enemy; and there was no combination in which he could ever be deemed impossible.

The men then in power, were too wise, and, at the same time, too weak, not to be willing that bygones should be bygones. Serrano and his party, as I have said, though so lately at the head of the Republic, had at all times stood up for a Constitutional Monarchy. The Liberals in the Cabinet and in the country, those who followed the lead of Canovas del Castillo, and who strained every nerve to withstand the influence of the reactionary and priestly parties ranging themselves under the standard of the Moderados, would have been only too glad of the accession to their ranks of those Unionists with whom they had so often been on friendly terms, and whose views and interests were identic with their own. Spanish politicians seldom trouble themselves about principles, and merely look to persons. Parties

seek their strength in mere numbers ; they prevail not so much by homogeneousness and unanimity as by mere bulk, and leaders are valued less for their consistency or ability than simply for their rank and influence.

An alliance between the Serranists and the Liberals in the Canovas Cabinet was at this juncture very desirable ; and Sagasta would, for his own part, gladly have given in to the proposal, but he could hardly in common decency act without his chief, Serrano ; and this latter, since his return from his one day's exile, had betaken himself to La Granja, where he had a house near the royal castle, and where he remained sulking and brooding, regardless of his duty as a Captain-General, which should have brought him to Madrid to do homage to his new Sovereign.

The denial of support on the part of the Serranists threw the Government more and more helplessly into the hands of the reactionists, and compelled them to adopt measures not only condemned by the general voice of the majority of the people, but even repugnant to their own better instincts and well-known convictions.

They modified the recent enactments respecting the marriage contract, re-establishing the absolute subordination of the civil to the ecclesiastical authorities. They pledged themselves to a restitution of all the

Church property that had been confiscated, and to the re-instalment of all the convents which had been suppressed, measures which, to say nothing of their justice, expediency, or opportunity, admitted of no practical execution ; as the confiscation and suppression were not in every case the acts of the late revolutionary Governments, but had in many instances been sanctioned by the vote of the Cortes under responsible ministers, and dated from the days of Mendizabal, in the early part of Queen Isabella's reign.

They gave back to clerical and Jesuitical censorship all its ascendancy over the press and over public education, disorganising the universities by the suspension, and even the arrest and banishment of professors of high renown, some of them because their opinions were supposed to be at variance with the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, whilst others were obnoxious only on account of their political precedents.

By these severe provisions the new King's Government hoped to conciliate the clergy, and to gain strength by its support ; they sued all the time for the return of a Nuncio to Madrid, and the re-establishment of those relations between the Spanish kingdom and the Holy See, which the disorders of the revolutionary period had temporarily broken off.

The Prime Minister, Canovas del Castillo, who

was still in the ascendent, was a man free from religious prejudices, and by no means inclined to favour priestly pretensions. The Pope and the Clergy, he was aware, had only accepted Don Alfonso as a *pis-aller*, when fortune favoured his accession, and popular applause seemed to insure his triumph. But the priests' cause was still that of Don Carlos, and they could never desert it so long as they saw the Pretender's standard floating on the towers of Estella, or his bayonets gleaming along the defiles of the Amescoas. The Court of the Vatican and the Spanish Prime Minister engaged in a game of cunning, the upshot of which was dependent on the course which events might take. The Pope was prodigal of benedictions which cost him nothing, and went so far as to appoint as Nuncio Monsignor Simeoni; but that Prelate put off his journey to Spain day after day, and week after week, being detained, as he pleaded, by "urgent private affairs;" and though he was at last definitively expected to be in Madrid on the 1st of April, that ominous date and the whole of the month passed before the crafty prelate made his appearance.

But strong as were the objections of the generality of the Spanish people to a renewed supremacy of the priestly party, still stronger was their horror of a re-appearance of those members of the King's family, of whom they had hoped to be rid for ever, and to

whose influence they referred all the evils of clerical tyranny. In all the clamour which, before his first campaign, greeted the King wherever he appeared, the cries of "Viva la Reina! Viva Isabel Segunda!" came daily more frequent. This was a desire of the Moderados to identify the cause of the mother with that of her son; but it was evident that Queen Isabella, by putting herself forward in too great a hurry, was greatly damaging Don Alfonso's interests, without advancing her own. Fears were entertained of the retrogradist party, which, not satisfied with the triumph of the monarchic cause, and the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty, wished for a recall of its former head; refusing to acknowledge the fact of the ex-Queen's abdication—which still awaited the sanction of the Cortes—and, in the meanwhile, insisting upon the return of that royal lady, as the natural guardian and adviser—the regent—of a King, who, if not by law, must yet, by all the rules of common-sense, be considered a minor.

Already, as a forerunner of the rest of the Royal Household, soon after the return of the King from his campaign, the return of the Countess of Girgenti, his sister Isabel, or, as she was popularly called, *Isabelita*, was announced; and she actually appeared in Madrid towards the middle of March, her presence being deemed advisable, not only as a solace to the

young King in his exalted solitude, but also in her capacity as heir-apparent to the Crown, by virtue of which she bore the title of Princess of Asturias.

The Princess, the King's senior by six years, was credited with sound and mature judgment, but her religious bigotry was said to exceed that of the ex-Queen, her mother. Closely upon her footsteps the Duke of Montpensier and his family were expected to follow. Montpensier, it was not forgotten, had repaid Queen Isabella's affection and generosity by the blackest treachery; but he had been readmitted to the Queen's favour with right royal magnanimity, and reports of schemes for a matrimonial alliance between the young King and his cousin, Mercedes, then in her 14th year, were already matter of common talk.

All these domestic arrangements, and the pressure of the "Generals' Camarilla"—an expression by which the malcontents designated the Count de Cheste, Primo de Rivera, Jovellar, and other officers of high rank, who had made the King, and seemed determined to rule him—created endless embarrassment to the Prime Minister, Canovas del Castillo, who felt that he was sitting between two stools—the Reactionist and the Liberal—and who well knew that a civilian, as he was, at the head of the Government, was a phenomenon a precedent for which was not to be found in the

recent annals of constitutional Spain, and which, from its very novelty, could not be expected to weather impending storms.

The situation at this juncture was full of peril, and it was entirely owing to the ill-success of the King's campaign. Had the result been favourable, the Spaniards would not for some time—would not, perhaps, for many years—have been disposed to cavil at the measures of the Government, or to fret at its reactionary tendencies. Peace and security would have been great boons to the people, and they would not have been too anxious to look into the mouth of a gift horse. But all they had got hitherto was a King of seventeen, a divided Council, and a Ministry powerless for good, and only too active for evil, an indefinite prolongation of the war, the devastation of many of the provinces, and order and safety in none of them.

Things were sure to mend, of course, and meanwhile the Prime Minister was yet for some time able to balance himself between the parties with all the dexterity of a consummate trimmer. The defection of General Cabrera, who—vainly solicited to draw his sword for that Carlist cause of which he had been the stoutest champion in his youth, now passed over to the Alfonsists, and came to tender his allegiance to the King in Madrid—was a deadly blow to the

Pretender, who, forsaken by a great number of his Spanish supporters, fell back upon the refuge of his mountain fastnesses, and there carried on a hopeless struggle at the head of a few French and other foreign Legitimists, till Don Alfonso again took the field against him a year later, 1876, and with better fortunes, driving the enemy from his last stronghold of Estella, and subsequently across the Pyrenees, effecting thus the deliverance and the thorough pacification of the country.

With the re-establishment of peace came back the popularity of the young Sovereign, and enabled him to reconcile his subjects to the presence of the Nuncio—whose journey coincided with Cabrera's desertion of the Carlist cause—to the return of the ex-Queen—who would not be denied, but who did not make too long a stay—in short, to all those backward steps to which the King's Government saw itself compelled, and which were the inevitable reaction against the mad extravagances, the egregious delusions, and the monstrous absurdities by which the revolutionary, and especially the republican, leaders had discredited the Liberal cause.

CHAPTER X.

DON ALFONSO'S COURT.

Conditions of the democratised Court—The King's *levée*—Solitude on the throne—King's attendants—Señor Morphy—A diplomatic reception—The English ambassador—His unwise address—His unpopularity—A muster of the nobility—Character of Spanish aristocracy—Popular prejudices against it—The Duque de Sesto—A Court anecdote.

A KING had come to the throne. It was full time for the Republic to take itself off. It was necessary that the Royal Madrid Alcazar should be swept clean of the soilure of those ultra-democratic usages by which the long continuance of plebeian rulers within its walls had defaced it. And it was not long before this necessity made itself felt.

Almost immediately after the young King's accession, a *levée* was announced for 2 o'clock in the afternoon of a Sunday. Nothing was said as to the rank or station that might qualify a person for admittance. A man had only to walk, ride, or drive to the palace in his uniform, or, if he had none, in

plain evening dress. The *levée* was as free to the whole world, as a reception of the President of the United States of North America; with this difference alone, that while in Madrid you were expected to make a polite bow to the Head of the State, at Washington you may walk up to him, seize his hand, and shake his arm as if it were a pump-handle. For the rest, the King's visitors entered *en masse*. They invaded the state apartments at their discretion, except inasmuch as they were so jammed up together that motion and circulation were soon at an end, and hats were flattened into pancakes. And, after all had been jostled, hustled, and crushed out of breath, a signal was given by the clapping of hands, in the Moorish fashion, a little opening or avenue was made, the crowd falling asunder upon some vigorous pressure, and away the multitude began to file towards the throne-room, higgledy-piggledy, just as they happened to have been thrown together, no card being demanded, and no question put as to name or condition; an Archbishop with jewelled cross and ring going in with a young cornet in a hussar jacket and tights; while a grand-chamberlain, flashing and blazing with stars, was being elbowed by a pack of citizens in the plain black suits of undertaker's men.

In we all went. We stood still, one by one, for

a second. We made such obeisances as our dancing-masters had taught us, and went our way, taking leave by another bow at the door.

The state apartments in the Alcazar are grand; the furniture costly; the works of art, so far as the subdued light allowed one to see, things without price. But I had only eyes for one object: for the slim, sallow, diminutive being standing alone on the crimson carpet which covered the steps of the throne, and giving bow for bow till his back must have ached.

How lonely he looked, I thought, how far removed from human interests and affections! A crowned head is necessarily placed at an immeasurable height above his subjects—a height dreaded and shunned, however revered and honoured, by genuine, disinterested friendship. But if isolation is the doom of a Sovereign under all circumstances, how infinitely more so must be the lot of this boy-king, surrounded by men all new and strange to him, and removed by difference of age as well as of rank?

One could not help conjuring up the image of that poor "boy-king" pacing the vast and sumptuous halls of his Alcazar, starting at the sound of his solitary footsteps on the marble floors. There was something dismaying in that utter loneliness, and the attempt that was made to relieve it by bringing over his

elder sister to live with him, had only aggravated the dreariness of his situation; for the Princess was a stiff, ungenial personage, who seldom or never crossed her brother's apartments, and most of whose time was spent in long visits to the Madrid nunneries.

Friendless, however, as Don Alfonso appeared in all the grandeur of that throne-room, he was in reality not altogether destitute of trusty private advisers, and intimate, inseparable companions. One of these was Señor Murphy, or Morphy, afterwards Conde de Morphy, an Irishman by extraction, who had been the young King's tutor, during the banishment of the royal family—a silent man, little known and seldom seen, whom the Prime Minister had now placed by the King's side, in the capacity of a *gentilhomme de chambre*, intending him to be his safest mentor, as well as his most constant attendant.

On the King's return from his short campaign, matters had considerably improved. Intercourse with his aides-de-camps at the bivouac and during the march, had supplied him with well-bred companions of his own age and nearer to his rank. He had never been shy or awkward; he came in wonderfully at his ease and unembarrassed. His antechamber was well-attended and guarded: access to him was only obtained upon deliberate application, and for ostensible purposes. The novelty of his situation had worn off.

He had learnt to feel at home, and could teach his subjects to know their places. We had seen the last of democratic *réunions*. Henceforth gala days at the palace were conducted with becoming order and decorum. Before the King's return from the north the carnival season was over in Madrid, and the time had come for the shows and pageantries of Lent. Spain had found a King; Madrid must again be "The Court." Many of the European Powers hastened to recognise the new Sovereign; and everything had to be made ready for the solemn reception of their diplomatic representatives.

King Alfonso professed to be a man of his age, and had done away with many of the usages to which the Spanish Court had clung for centuries, and which were, perhaps, mere remnants of old Moorish patriarchal life. He did not, like his mother, address his subjects as slaves, with the familiar, half-affectionate, half-contemptuous, "Thou." He did not suffer them to kneel at his feet; and he signified his pleasure that his name, Alfonso, should be signed at the foot of his laws and decrees, instead of that flourish—"rubrica de la Real Mano," which was, since Charlemagne, the undignified expedient of illiterate monarchs.*

* "*Està rubricado por la Real Mano*," was written at the foot of the royal acts or proclamations at the usual place of the signature, counter-signed by the ministers to give it authenticity. In some of the most important documents the Queen signed, "*Yo, la Reina*."

Even King Alfonso, however, seemed aware of the necessity of observing towards diplomacy all the forms prescribed by immemorial etiquette. A State can commit no greater blunder than that of democratising either its military or its naval, or above all things, its foreign department. Diplomacy is a more than middle-aged lady, unable to dispense with the silk and velvet, the paint, powder, and patches of her candle-light toilette. Consequently the grand gilt state-coaches from the royal mews, newly dusted and varnished, were on the 24th of February, 1875, parading the Madrid streets, and carrying the diplomatic body to the palace with teams of six horses for the Heads of Embassies or Legations, of four for the Secretaries, and a modest pair for the Attachés; the convoys in all instances preceded by four outriders, and followed by half a squadron of Lancers, whose officers rode close by the panel of the carriage-door on either side.

There were ponderous coaches, big coachmen's wigs, fat footmen's calves, an elegant *Introduitor de los Embajadores*, to do the honour as master of the ceremonies, and music at the entrance of the Armoury-Gate of the Alcazar, with a crowd of the *alta servidumbre*, or sublime *valetaille*, to usher in the great personages; the whole got up in grand style and worthy of the occasion.

On the day above mentioned the Portuguese and

Russian Ministers went through the ceremony. Two days later the French and Austrian ambassadors made their bow, next appeared the Italian, the German, the Belgian and other envoys, and last, though not least, Her British Majesty's Minister, the Rt. Hon. A. H. Layard, who had been the latest to present his credentials, ostensibly, and as it was said, because those documents ran great risk and lost time in travelling through the districts still infested by the bands of Carlist marauders; but in reality because His British Excellency gave in to the promptings of strong political partizanship; harboured a hankering tenderness for the Serrano Government; had neither faith in, nor sympathy with, a Bourbon restoration, and had consistently represented such an event to his Government as an impossibility; carrying his opposition so far as to withhold his countenance from the royal pageantry when all his colleagues sat in the tribune set apart for their accommodation on the 19th of January, the day of Don Alfonso's first entrance into Madrid.

Whether it was of his own person or of his office that the English Minister entertained so high an opinion, it is a fact that throughout the duration of his mission in Spain he dabbled in the home politics of that country with greater zeal than a Talleyrand would have recommended. He took King Amadeo under his protection, when the least discernment, indispensable

in his profession, should have satisfied him that the downfall of the Savoy Prince was inevitable; had endless disputes with the presidents that followed upon one another at the head of ephemeral Republics, and by his too stubborn opposition to the Alfonsist party in its visible ascendancy, he drew upon himself the ill-will of the *jeunesse dorée* of the *Club des Véloces*, a set of fast youths whose devotion to the Bourbons had powerfully contributed to the recent change.

He was now full of his grievances on the score of the indignities to which he was exposed, owing, as he thought, to the ill-will with which the Court requited his too open opposition; but, in reality, in consequence of the old customs strictly enforced at the Alcazar, according to one of which the carriage of "an Ambassador" was entitled to drive through the main palace entrance and across the yard to the grand staircase, while in the case of an "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary," the carriage had to stop at the front-door, and his Excellency, with his wife, if he had one, had to walk in their pumps all the distance across the yard to the staircase. This invidious difference, so galling to the English Minister's pride, had been discontinued under the republican *régime*; and its re-establishment at the new King's court was certainly not the least motive which arrayed our

diplomatist amongst the most implacable adversaries of the Restoration.

The English Envoy in his address expressed the Queen of England's hopes that "His Majesty's reign would be marked by a constitutional, enlightened, and tolerant policy." He spoke, one must believe, in obedience to instructions, but there was something, either in the matter or the manner of his speech, which grated very harshly on Spanish susceptibilities; for neither the French, the Austrian, the Russian, nor any other representative of the great powers, had ventured to lecture the young King as to the principles which should guide his home policy, and to which he had already openly and solemnly bound himself; the German Minister alone having gone so far as to congratulate the King on the "liberal politics, which, as he had promised, were to characterise his rule." The German's object seemed to be merely to take notice of the King's avowed good intentions, and to encourage them. But the Englishman's declaration had the character of deliberate gratuitous advice. The one applauded what the King was going to do. The other expected, or all but bade, the King to do it, as if still doubtful whether he would or not.

Spanish pride seemed to resent this too open attempt to influence the King; and the complete reticence,

with respect to these points, in the King's answer to the envoy was visibly intended to show a determination that such free institutions as might befit his subjects should flow spontaneously from the King's own wisdom and goodness, and not be adopted at the dictation of foreign potentates, however friendly.

The impression made by Her Majesty's Minister on his first appearance at the new Court did not soon wear off, but had the effect of embittering all subsequent transactions; when the men in the King's surrounding might be heard freely discussing the character of our representative, describing him as overbearing, ill-bred, and cantankerous (*impertinente, grosero, y regañón*).

Not many days after the diplomatic receptions, another ceremony was performed at the Alcazar, of an even more private and exclusive character. This was the *cubrimiento*, or "covering of the grandees' heads," a solemnity of the highest significance in the palmy days of the old Castilian Monarchy, when it conveyed with it the investiture of feudal rights, titles, and estates, but which had become of late years a mere shadow of departed greatness, till it had been altogether discontinued in revolutionary times.

It was natural that the Restoration should wish to surround royalty with some of its former lustre, and to revive such customs and observances as might still

sway the imagination of the mass of the people. At the same time it was desirable to keep off the multitude, for no one was sure whether, if the spectators were many and promiscuous, "on ne sifflerait pas la pièce."

Of the hundred nobles or so who came to muster, some were already *cubiertos*, while others were newly admitted to the honour of the *cubrimiento*, i.e., of some the rank had already been acknowledged in former reigns; others were either minors just now of age, coming in for their paternal or ancestral titles, some were newly created. The King of Spain does not, like the Pope, provide hats for those he wishes to raise to the highest rank. He only bestows upon them permission to make use of their own, thereby conferring a privilege reserved to the foremost class of grandees in his kingdom. By being allowed to wear his hat, or hats—as the Duke of Ossuna, for one, was the owner of eight hats—in His Majesty's presence, a Spanish subject is placed as nearly as possible on a footing of equality with his Sovereign.

The "Gazette" of Madrid published the names of all the nobles present at the ceremony; a goodly array of titles, yet far from conveying an adequate idea of the number or even of the dignity of the Spanish peerage; for several of the greatest nobles, as the Dukes of Ossuna, Medinaceli, Frias, etc., did

not make their appearance, some being absent on distant or foreign service, some travelling or living in retirement, and finally, some—like the Count of Belascoain, son of Diego Leon, executed for treason in 1841—following the banner of Don Carlos, and disdaining to come to terms with a “Constitutional” Sovereign.

Were ever Alfonso XII. to become a Constitutional King *de facto*, as hitherto he was by name, one could see that there was in Spain no lack of materials whereon to build an “Upper House,” whether it consisted of hereditary magnates or of life peers. But such an institution met in Spain the same objections as in France; for, in the opinion of the “Liberals,” the Spanish aristocracy was a house divided against itself, consisting, on the one hand, of ancient families, many of whose members possessed neither in their estates nor in their mental faculties or energies, the barest vestiges of their former greatness, and, on the other, of mere mushrooms, soldiers of fortune, who had won their rank, not like some of the French marshals, in battle against their country’s enemies, but in civil broils in which mutiny and arrant treachery had been often of more avail than sturdy valour or heroic devotion.

Between the old and the new nobility, as may be easily imagined, there was no good blood. The titles

lately conferred, in many instances unsupported by wealth, or only by ill-gotten wealth, like the Devil's meal "soon going to bran," became a mere burden upon men, neither privileged by rank, nor qualified by training, to exercise authority; while the places assigned to the ancient grandees about the person of the Sovereign—those courtly dignities for which great landowners, the *ricos hombres* of former ages, bartered away their proud feudal independence—were, during the late disgraceful reigns, and especially under Queen Isabella, invaded by a herd of unworthy minions, contact with whom was shunned by any man with even the shadow of self-respect.

In all these Latin countries, however, in Spain, as well as in France and Italy, there is a morbid, envious and rancorous spirit of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," which nothing can satisfy, except a society on a perfectly dead level. The Spanish "Liberals" delight in exaggerating the falling off of the upper classes, and take the degeneracy, imbecility, and pusillanimity of a nobleman as a matter of course. Aristocracy as an instrument of government in a monarchical state has been thrown aside by revolutionary politicians, unable or unwilling to perceive how much of the scramble for power, of the hunt after place, and of the instability of all modern institutions, was the result of that mad-dog cry which proscribed all

men of independent position, and excluded all but the most needy adventurers from the management of public affairs.

It seems impossible that a reaction should not eventually set in ; that it should not become manifest that the war of classes has been carried too far ; that the dead level of democracy is a chimera ; and that, as social distinctions must needs exist, their basis may be most easily laid where pride of descent, honourable traditions and associations, are likely to foster generous ambition, at the same time that they supply those means of ease, high training and habits of command by which distinction is most naturally attained. It is impossible that men should not learn to value that school of honour which " binds " the nobleman to the principle of his caste. Impossible that they should not see how much easier it is to re-construct an old aristocracy than to keep off an upstart one. For that there must and always will be an aristocracy, is as sure as it is that in a church there must be a laity and a clergy, and in an army men and gentlemen—those to obey and follow, these to lead and rule.

The noblemen presented on this occasion, delivered addresses to the King expressive of the sacred duty of unbounded loyalty devolving upon them, with the rights and privileges they claimed or conferred. Not

a few of the orators indulged in pardonable allusions to those exploits of their ancestors, or to those personal services, on which their titles were grounded. The Duke of Valencia, nephew of Narvaez, for instance, dwelt at great length on the distinguished part played by the progenitors of the marshal, his uncle, in those Gothic times in which they aided their sovereigns in the recovery of the southern provinces of Valencia and Andalusia. The Count of Peñaranda de Bracamonte, "having," as he said, "neither distinction nor personal merits of his own," descanted on the honours won in remote times by his wife's forefathers, whose titles, according to Spanish law, became his by right of his marriage.

At the head of the magnates present at this solemnity, and, indeed, acting as fugleman to his peers, was the Duke of Sexto, or Sesto, better known under his older title of Marquis of Alcañices, a man of very ancient descent, the stanchest friend of the dynasty, who had followed the Queen mother to Paris, where he married the Russian widow of De Morny. On the accession of Don Alfonso this personage had been placed by the Prime Minister about the King's person, with the cumulative duties of Majordomo Mayor, Grand Equerry and almost all other Court dignities.

One evening, on his return from the north, the

young King had retired late at night, after a day of fatiguing ceremony, and was alone in his bedroom with his faithful Morphy, half-undressed and preparing for his night's rest, when all at once he rose from his armchair, and began fidgeting about the apartment, rummaging from corner to corner with apparent anxiety, looking under the bed and behind the window-curtains, evidently seeking something that he expected and at the same time half-dreaded to find.

Morphy, surprised and somewhat alarmed, followed every step of his royal master, instinctively and from sheer sympathy aiding the search of which he could not guess the purpose; and at last, baffled at all points, he threw himself into the King's way, and asked:

"What is the matter, your Majesty? Do you suspect anything? Have you seen anything to make you uneasy?"

"Ah, bah!" answered the King, with a sly grin at his own good joke, "I was only looking for *that* Alcañices. He is always sure to turn up somewhere; but it seems he is really gone, and," he added with glee, "we are rid of him till to-morrow."

This trifling anecdote, which was at the time the theme of general talk, whether authentic or not, was not without serious significance.

Alcañices was a good-natured popular nobleman, a grand seigneur, who kept a good stud of horses, and

employed a smart Yorkshire groom, and he was by no means personally obnoxious to his young Sovereign. It was only a harmless joke that Don Alfonso indulged in when he hinted by that dumb show that the company of his Majordomo Mayor could be *toujours perdrix* to him, or, to use a Spanish phrase, that he "found him even in his soup." But it could be no matter for wonder if the perpetual watch and restraint the Government deemed it expedient to put upon the King's movements proved somewhat irksome to him, and he wished now and then to be relieved of the presence of a companion, however amusing, who seemed commissioned to follow him as his shadow.

CHAPTER XI.

ROYAL DEVOTIONS.

Holy Week in Madrid—Washing the paupers' feet—Easter weather—The royal palace—A well-dressed crowd—Their look—Their behaviour—A short aside dialogue—The Hall of Columns—An imposing sight—The ceremony—The banquet—The attendants—The guests—Visiting the Holy Sepulchre—A royal street procession—A mournful pageantry.

ON the 27th of March, being Thursday in Holy Week, Don Alfonso performed *el lavatorio de los pies de los pobres*.

This had been from time immemorial one of the most imposing ceremonies of the Court of Spain, held at all times as a signal evidence of the piety, humility, and charity of the Catholic sovereigns. Political considerations were not perhaps without some influence on the devotional feelings which prompted this act of Christian abnegation. Like their Austrian cousins of the Vienna line, the Spanish kings aspired to combine in their own persons the functions of commanders-in-chief of the army with those of visible

heads of their ecclesiastical establishment. The rank of *Imperator* involved the dignity of *Pontifex Maximus*; and, as wielder of the "Secular Arm," the chief of every Christian state was always anxious to play as conspicuous a part, as in his lay capacity could be assigned to him, in all the solemnities of the dominant Church. The Pope, being the "servant of servants," emulated the sublime lowliness of his Divine Master, by the *lavanda dei piedi* of twelve beggars, personifying the Twelve Apostles, in the Vatican. The Kings of Spain followed the example in their palace, performing the ablution of twelve of their own mendicants, and waiting upon them at the banquet spread for them at their own hospitable royal board.

This observance, which was punctually maintained by the devout and Conservative Isabella II. throughout her reign, was discontinued by King Amadeo—"a sovereign," as the Minister of State, De Castro, observed that very day to a distinguished foreign diplomatist, "forced upon Spain by Protestant influence"—a very good reason why the custom should now be revived by the young representative of the restored dynasty. And it was deemed expedient to give the ceremony the utmost importance in Madrid at this moment, when, owing to the captivity of the Church in Rome, the Holy Father himself had, as he said, "been compelled to strip the festivities of Holy Week of their gorgeous

splendour, and to perform them privately and almost by stealth within his Vatican prison."

For several days all the Madrid journals had filled their columns with programmes of the sacred functions of which every church in the capital was day after day to be the theatre. We were told which of them were to exhibit the loftiest "Monuments," or holy sepulchres; where the *Miserere* was to be sung by the most impressive choir, and where the *Tenebræ* were to be produced with the most awful effect. The names of the sacred orators who would edify us with the most pathetic eloquence were given; the churches to which the King and the Infanta Isabel, Countess of Girgenti, just now newly arrived, would walk in state, were mentioned, as well as the line of streets to be followed by the funeral procession on Good Friday.

We were informed that for forty-eight hours the clappers of all church-bells would be tied up—to the great relief of tender ears; and the traffic of all public and private conveyances interrupted—to the great inconvenience of railway and other travellers; no other noise being allowed than that of the rattles of the street urchins.

For a whole week, in short, the city would mourn in sackcloth and ashes, and, in the end, the whole affair would wind up on the Saturday with a *funcion de gallos*, or entertainment at the cockpit, the re-

opening of the theatres, and the first grand bull-fight of Easter Sunday—a bull-fight to which the King and his royal sister would proceed in “an open barouche, drawn by horses caparisoned with silk trappings, the collars ornamented with three dozen silver bells a head.” *

The main attractions of Holy Week in Spain are held out by the southern cities, and especially Seville, but Madrid seemed bent this year on eclipsing all other shows, and it was, after all, only here that a live king and a princess could be seen visiting the sepulchres on foot, and the descendant of St. Fernando pouring water on twelve poor men’s feet, and wiping them with his own royal towel.

Whether it be owing to some peculiar lunar influences, or to other meteoric combinations, or, as people here think, to supernatural intervention, I shall not undertake to say; but it is a fact to which my long experience can bear witness, that in Roman Catholic countries splendid weather seldom fails to impart a peculiar brightness to the halcyon days of Holy Week. The programme of outdoor performances can thus, in these climates, be followed to the letter with but little fear of atmospheric disturbance.

* “*En carruaje montado á la calesera, meuando los caballos ricos atalajes bordados de seda, y collares de 36 campanillas de plata cada uno.*”

The year 1875 was no exception to the rule. The spring in Madrid was unusually backward; the nights were still chilly, and the keen mountain air neutralised the sun's power; but the great luminary blazed forth in all its radiancy, and all the energies of the water-pumps failed to subdue the dust invading town and country—those clouds of dust, “a peck of which,” according to the old saying, “is worth a king's ransom” in England.

On Thursday, at an early time, yet by no means too early, we went to the royal palace. Mr. Sala was again with me, having returned from Barcelona after a short stay. Everything about the Madrid Alcazar is grand, if not strictly beautiful. The commanding site, with the view of the dreary yet vast open country, and of the bleak Guadarrama ridges; the courtyard with its massive but clumsy Doric colonnade; the chapel on the ground-floor surmounted by its fine dome, with its wealth of marble and frescoed vault, a spacious vestibule of magnificent loftiness, the wide “Prince's staircase,” and at the landing the “Hall of Columns” (*Salon de las Columnas*), a stately entrance to the somewhat too gorgeous suite of state apartments; everything on a large scale, and befitting a grand Imperial home.

Some time elapsed before the crowd issued from

the chapel where the religious service was performed. And it was not without some struggle that those favoured with a pass could make their way from their carriages to the double row of soldiers that kept back the unwashed throng, among whom one could descry a sprinkling of undeniable pickpockets; but once within shelter of those bayonets, once within the threshold, and as you ascended the grand staircase, you felt as if you had emerged from an angry sea into a haven of peace, and moved in the midst of a compact mass of comparatively decorous silk and velvet, well-behaved broadcloth, and ceremonious gold lace.

We had the *élite* of the Madrid population with us: the upper ranks; a minority of the rising middle orders; both sexes, all ages; the men in uniform or in sober evening black, the ladies in the brilliant colours of Court finery, only coquettishly half hidden by the black mantilla, *de rigueur* at this season—good company all, to judge by the outward form; all looking their best—a fine set of people, mostly with olive complexion, but with finely-cut features, large dark eyes, an air of quiet dignity, an expression of bright intelligence and quick sensibility.

I looked to my right, I looked to my left, scanned those small ears, those thin straight noses, those elongated oval chins, those well-shaped hands and feet, indicative of race, and I whispered to my companion:

"I say, Sala," said I, "I am afraid you and I are the two ugliest persons here present."

"Speak for yourself, sir," he answered curtly.

We made thus our entrance into the hall of the columns which we found already crowded with spectators, more than 800 of whom were ladies, standing all round, somewhat cramped up on benches, row upon row, leaving barely the most limited space open for the performers.

Within this space the twelve paupers, or apostles, sat on a settee, each of them with his best foot foremost—the foot and leg bare to the knee, and as well "prepared" for the occasion as by dint of much soap and water could be contrived.

Entered in procession, the King in his grand uniform, with a towel tied round his waist, apron wise, followed by Cardinal Moreno, Archbishop of Valladolid, in his scarlet robes and skull cap, and behind and all round them a grand staff of grandees and marshals, an array of golden uniforms, only distinguishable from the no less sumptuous liveries of the Court minions by the stars, crosses, cordons, and scarves of their chivalrous orders; many of the servants, frequently chosen among deserving old soldiers, only showing humble silver and bronze medals.

The procession came to a halt on the narrow space before the seated twelve. The Cardinal stepped for-

ward, attended by a grandee holding basin and ewer, and sprinkled a few drops of perfumed water over each of the bare feet in succession. The King came after, kneeling before each foot, rubbing it slightly with his towel, then stooping upon it as if he meant to kiss it—but he didn't.

The ceremony did not last many minutes.

The twelve men then got up; they were marshalled with great pomp round the hall, then seated in a row on one side of a long table (which had hitherto been hidden behind a screen), with their faces to the spectators, in the order observed in Leonardo's grand picture of the Last Supper.

In the rear of the table, on a high and lofty platform, stood the Court. In the middle, the Infanta Isabella, Countess of Girgenti, heiress apparent of the throne, upon whom, after long discussion, the title of Princess of Asturias had been lately conferred, looking tall and majestic, and even somewhat stern and sour, from her elevated station, and with the only grave countenance in all that vast assemblage. She was simply attired in gray silk, and wore a white mantilla. By her side, right and left and behind, were her ladies of honour, the Cabinet Ministers, and a multitude of State and Palace dignitaries. On the extreme right stood the diplomatic body, the heads and subalterns of all foreign embassies and legations, the English and

the Dutch Ministers alone excepted; the latter from indisposition, the former because "the ceremony was not official, or political, and attendance was mere matter of courtesy."

The King and his immediate suite were the only waiters at the table.

Innumerable dishes were handed in at the door, and passed from hand to hand to these exalted attendants, who, ranged in front of the table, laid them before the humble guests. Don Alfonso, quite in his element, and heartily enjoying the fun, frisked about with unspeakable zest and unwearied alacrity, rushing eagerly from one end of the table to the other, with a kind word and a beaming smile for each of the bystanders, doing the work of twenty, seeing to everything, anxious that all should go well, and now and then turning towards us thronged spectators as if for our approval, all flushed in the face, alert and sprightly, merry as a schoolboy, "happy as a king."

The Marquis of Alcañices, his Mayor of the Palace, seconded the King's movements, close upon him as his shadow; and no less assiduous was His Eminence of Valladolid, a portly prelate, with a fair complexion and a bland good countenance, tall, as most priests are in these Latin countries, where, by a strange contrast, most soldiers are undersized.

Aides-de-camp of high rank, and grandees of the

first class, helped their Sovereign in his task as much as he would let them.

The curious sight, however, was that of the poor Twelve Apostles. Alone, seated where all else were standing, there they were, all demure, bewildered, and, to say the truth, extremely bored—old men dressed in seedy black, with white cravats, like Methodist scripture-readers; the blind, the halt, and the cripple; dumb and motionless as the Roman senators awaiting the invading Gauls; too shy to dare to look at, let alone touch, the exquisite viands which were thus thrust temptingly under their perplexed noses, and were as swiftly whisked off to make room for still daintier delicacies, the whole banquet coming and going before them with the tantalizing rapidity with which the Governor of Barataria's dinner vanished at the touch of the forbidding wand of the redoubtable Doctor Tirateafuera.

The farce—for, in spite of the solemn occurrence of which it was emblematic, it had as much seriousness in it as a school-feast on an English squire's lawn, where the governess makes tea, the lady cuts the cake, and the children with great glee hand the slices to the young rustics—lasted about an hour, at the end of which the *fanfare* gave the signal of departure. The King and his suite marched off in stately order; the Princess and the Court followed,

and the apostolic paupers were shown to the kitchen, where they were treated to a more substantial meal; and each of them was a happy man, with his basket of broken victuals for his family, and 100 reals (about 21s.) in his pocket.

Presently the royal party issued from the palace bound on their State visit to the Seven Churches.

The order of march consisted of a picket of Civil Guards on foot, dressed in their old uniform for the occasion—blue coat with buff facings, white leather shorts, and high black gaiters; then followed lackeys in jockey's costumes, with white wigs, yellow jackets, and velvet caps, which they carried in their left hand, while the right brandished a long horse-whip; and with them coachmen, grooms, footmen with long canes, a whole host of porters, ushers, and other *valetaille*, all arrayed in the picturesque garb of former ages with a conservatism which constitutes the bright side of Spanish institutions, but which gave the would-be religious pageantry somewhat the air of a masquerade; next to these the majordomos, the King's gentlemen of high rank, the *grandees* and their retinue, and finally the royal personages; the young King in the middle, hat-in-hand, swaying to the right and left with his wonted briskness, all wreathed in smiles, and indefatigable in his acknowledgment of the homage paid him by the multitude on the footpath, and by

the more select crowd at the windows—a picture of good-humour, delighted to see himself the focus of all eyes, the observed of all observers, the hero of the pageantry.

A little behind him came the Princess, somewhat more pleased and gracious in look, daintily picking her steps on the sand which had been strewn to soften the hardness of the diamond stones of the Madrid pavement, her rich train trailing in the dust for many a yard behind her; and in a mass, in the rear, the Cardinal, the Majordomo Mayor, the ladies of honour, the Cabinet, the Court.

Close to the courtly throng came two huge old-fashioned sedan chairs, outside all silver, and so massive and clumsy that no less than six stout footmen were required to carry them. These were intended to come to the rescue of the King and Princess, should either, or both of them, feel overpowered by the fatigue of their walk, or by the emotions attendant on their devotional errand.

Soldiers on foot and on horseback, battalions of cadets, squadrons of lancers and dragoons, and even a battery of mounted artillery, closed the march.

The muffled drums, the stately strains of martial music, the colours of the flags hanging half-mast high on the public buildings, the gay attire and mirthful look of the crowds, gave the whole show a half mournful,

half joyous character, hardly becoming the solemn anniversary it was intended to commemorate.

After the ceremonies of Thursday, and the ensuing procession of Good Friday, the elegant world of Madrid met towards evening in the Carrera de Geronimo, where the ladies were airing their new spring finery till a late hour, contriving thus to make Holy Week and its religious solemnities as gay as a second Carnival season.

The newspapers, however, intimated that these were days of fast and humiliation: "No se debe comer carne" (meat is forbidden).

CHAPTER XII.

ROYAL SPORTS.

Popularity of the King—The Easter Sunday bull-fight—Spanish bull-fights—Costliness of the popular amusement—Its brutalising effects—Bull-fight and civil war—Spanish callousness to bloodshed—Good and bad of the Spanish character—The Spaniards judged by themselves—Influence of the Government on the people.

It would have been well for King Alfonso if no graver cares than those connected with Holy Week performances had ever pressed upon him. His appearance in public was almost the only thing in his reign that might be described as “a success.” His affability and condescension, especially to the lower orders, won him as many suffrages as the policy of his Ministers was calculated to lose. This youthful Monarch, heir of Habsburgs and Bourbons, was endowed with those peculiar graces by which his ancestors of both those dynasties contrived in former years to reconcile the masses to their absolute rule. No other sovereign, not the Pope himself, ever acquitted himself of those Holy

Week tasks more creditably, and with greater satisfaction to his subjects, than did the mere college lad, on the sole impulse of his frolicsome temperament. The people in the mass are but children, and their loyalty springs readily in favour of a ruler that consents now and then to show himself in their midst, and be a child with them.

On the other hand, a king's instinct prompts him to look upon mankind from a height which levels all differences, and makes those least welcome that stand nearest to him. "*Seul il fera le bonheur de son peuple,*" was the motto of the feeble, yet self-willed Louis XVI. of France. And Charles Emmanuel II. of Savoy, who had been all his life at feud with his nobility, when at his last gasp, ordered his door to be thrown open to the thronging multitude, that he might have the satisfaction of dying "*au milieu de son peuple.*" It was always "*son peuple*" with these benevolent despots. But the day came when the possessive pronoun was reversed; it was the mob of Versailles, in 1789, that "conquered *son Roi.*"

Lent was over, but the new King's duties to his people were not at an end. Almost every day at this season was a grand day for Madrid, but Easter Sunday was the greatest of all, for on that day, in the afternoon, Don Alfonso was to honour the new bull-ring with his presence.

Let the reader be reassured. I am not going at this moment to try his nerves by attempting a new description of the horrors of a bull-fight. Neither do I feel disposed to moralise on the truculent disposition of a people whom no king or priest has ever been able or willing to wean from a sanguinary sport which uninitiated strangers denounce as both disgusting and stupidly monotonous, but of which some of them—to wit, some sporting members of Her British Majesty's Legation—often become the most enthusiastic patrons. It is only from an economical, financial, and social point of view that I crave permission to say a few words on the subject.

If it is true that nothing is easier than to govern the Spaniards with “bread and bulls” (*pan y toros*), it must also be allowed that they never enjoyed their *toros* with so grim a prospect of their *pan* being scarce as they did at this Easter season of 1875, when the new King came in at the end of seven years of political convulsions, and in the midst of a civil war in the provinces, and of a rebellion in the colonies, of which as yet no one could foresee the end. And yet, at no previous time was the “national sport” pursued with greater frenzy or with more reckless extravagance.

The new bull-ring in Madrid, a splendid colosseum in the Moorish taste, was constructed to accommodate

above a thousand spectators. It was built from the proceeds of the sale of the former amphitheatre, bought and pulled down by the Marquis of Salamanca, to be sold again in building lots intended as a continuation of the new *barrio*, or ward of the city which bears the great banker's name. The new ring, therefore, was built as a speculation on the Haussmann principle, and did not cost much either to the State or the town; but its enjoyment entailed heavier expenses upon the people, because the greater distance at which it was at all possible to find a site for it—above a mile from the Puerta del Sol—involved the hire of cab, or a two reals' ride in an omnibus, or, later, in a tramway car, over and above the purchase of the ticket.

The ordinary price of a ticket varied from 12 to 40 reals; but the tickets were bought beforehand by sharp speculators, from whom they were hardly to be obtained at less than double the original price. The ring on this Easter-day was as densely crowded as it is possible to imagine, the attendance being far more considerable than it was in the previous autumn, when the new building was inaugurated under Serrano's auspices. Taking 20 reals, or 4s., as the average cost of the ticket—a very low computation—the Madrid people, numbering about 300,000 souls, paid for bulls certainly not less than 320,000 reals:

something more than £3,200, or a real ($2\frac{1}{2}d.$) per head of the population.

If we reflect that on this same Easter Sunday there were, in the same city, as many as sixteen theatres open, that some of them had several day and night performances; that the Sunday concert at the Circo Alfonso was thronged with the wealth and fashion of the place; and finally, that in the evening and till past midnight, hundreds of touters were hawking lottery tickets in every street, making the night hideous by the shouts of their tempting offers—it will be allowable to conclude that on Sunday the average outlay of every soul in Madrid in mere dissipation must have exceeded 4 reals, or that the town squandered 1,200,000 reals (£12,000) as the price of its day's amusement—without taking into account the expense of locomotion, and the money spent on the finery and the luxuries inseparable from a day of idleness, display, and self-indulgence.

Those who on that day beheld the multitude cramming the bull-ring on all sides, or those, who, like myself, having witnessed bull-slaughtering enough to last them all their lifetime, were content to remain outside, and survey the throng as it stood, drawn up on both sides of the way, all along the distance from the Plaza de Toros to the Puerta del Sol, and again from this to the Alcazar, in the Plaza de Oriente, all eager to

see the King and the Princess drive past in their superb equipages after the fight—all these were of one mind about reckoning the crowd at something exceeding 100,000 persons—something reminding them of the grand days of Epsom or Longchamps. And it may be questioned whether, even for the Derby or the Grand Prix, London or Paris ever were mulcted at the Madrid rate of 1s. or 1 fr. per head of the population. Besides, there is this to be observed : that the great Epsom race, and the great Putney regatta, whatever outlay it may cause, only bring the London multitude together twice in the year, while Madrid and every large city in Spain, find money for a *corrida de toros* every Sunday, and often on week-days, throughout the whole summer season.

There is no exaggeration in asserting that in Madrid every soul—man, woman, or child—pays annually for bulls alone, 10s., and this, added to the theatres, the public balls, the “religious ceremonies”—which are mere play, and have nothing whatever to do with religion—greatly exceeded the taxes which habitual misgovernment and chronic civil wars had lately so fearfully aggravated.

The tradition which describes the citizens of Pompeii as caught by one of the most formidable eruptions of Vesuvius, and perishing under a shower of fire and ashes before they were at all aware of their danger,

must have occurred to anyone who, on that Easter Sunday, gazed on the happy faces and heard the joyous shouts of that myriad and a half of eager spectators gloating on those sickening shambles of the arena.

It seemed strange that while Madrid was so loudly applauding the fury of the bull goring the horses, or exulting at the skill of the *espada* stabbing the bull, so few, if any, of the persons present, should think of the other more earnest, if not less barbarous, game going on at the time in so many provinces of the peninsula ; that they should think so little of Spaniards butchered by Spaniards, as often in cold blood as in the heat of passion and strife ; that they should be so indifferent to the atrocity of that fratricidal contest, about the right or wrong, about the causes of which so many of those engaged in it knew as little as the wretched horse standing in the middle of the ring with bandaged eyes, and awaiting the charge of an antagonist equally blinded by rage.

But what may appear stranger still was that people at the bull-fight should distress themselves as little about the cost of the Carlist war in money as in blood ; that so few should wonder that a nation which Providence has blessed with such inexhaustible sources of wealth, and which has nevertheless brought itself so near the verge of bankruptcy, could still be so rich, or

so reckless, as to lavish millions in the pursuit of pleasure.

I have no wish to be severe on the Spaniards ; and I think it would be unfair to take them at the valuation which in unguarded moments, and when vexed with one another, they put upon themselves.

The Spaniards (who would deny it ?) have been and are a great people. As soldiers and navigators, as writers and artists, as statesmen and orators, the countrymen of Gonzalvo and Cortes, of Cervantes and Murillo, of Ximenes and Castelar, may be fully justified even in their overweening conceit of their own worth. But how can the Spaniards hope to do justice to themselves, if they so consistently and perseveringly deny it to one another ? What credit could strangers give to their boast of the transcendent valour of the Spanish race, so long as they read Alfonsist bulletins describing the "*vergonzosa fuga*" (disgraceful flight) of their Carlist adversaries, or so long as they listened to Carlist accounts of the *cobardia* (cowardice) with which the Alfonsists abandoned an impregnable position. In all international contests it is the pride of a just and generous soldier to bear witness to the bravery of a vanquished adversary. The Archduke Albrecht of Austria declared that the Italian battalions at Custozza had behaved "*unendlich tapfer*," and the Germans never dreamt of branding with pusillanimity the 100,000

gallant Frenchmen who surrendered *en masse* at Sedan. It is only by Spaniards that similar aspersions are thrown upon Spaniards' courage.

And the same may be said of the character for humanity that the two contending parties gave to one another. If you heard the Alfonsists, the followers of Don Carlos were "a pack of robbers and murderers, sparing neither age nor sex, guilty of every imaginable outrage, cannibalism itself not excepted." But let the Carlists tell their own tale, and their warfare was "the most humane and chivalrous," only a few prisoners being now and then shot in cold blood and simply in retaliation of the deeds of treachery and savagery of which their Alfonsist enemies were daily making themselves guilty.

What conclusion could a stranger, in his attempt to reconcile the two versions, be expected to come to? Why, "A plague o' both your houses," he must say; "let both be believed, and let the atrocities on both sides be laid to the charge of your common Spanish nature."

Unprejudiced and impartial strangers, while not blind to the failings, are by no means unwilling to acknowledge the splendid qualities of the Spanish character. The Spanish people of all classes, and especially of the lowest, are, it is allowed, sound at heart. There is an innate dignity, simplicity, and

honesty among the very peasantry of that country; a sense of honour, keen and susceptible, however often morbid and vitiated, that may well justify the boast of the grandee in Goldoni's comedy: "*In Ispagna non vi è gente bassa*" (There are no lower classes in Spain). The populace is uncivilised, but in a certain sense uncorrupt; a people of whom, as the ancient Romans said of the Corsicans, you could make no servants; the very last men for any kind of menial work, whether this be said to their praise or their discredit. But all the worst that can be found in them is the result of education; not of want of instruction, but of the false training they received at the hands of their religious and political instructors. The Spainard's moral sense is blunted by habit contracted in tender age. Has he not been taken to the bull-ring from very infancy? Has he not been taught that animals are "not Christians," that they have "no souls," consequently "no feeling?"

You turn away sick at heart from the sight of the poor defenceless horse gored to death by the bull, trailing his torn bowels and trampling them under foot on the sand. The gentle Sevillian matron or damsel at your elbow is at a loss to understand your squeamishness.

"What ails you, Caballero?" she says. "That

poor horse!" "Bah! it is only an old screw, not worth two reals. *No vale na'!*" (It has no value).

One may wonder whether the bull-ring would be so dear to the populace were it not countenanced by those who call themselves their "betters;" were it not for the splendour with which royalty and all that is great and good in the country has invested it; whether, likewise, in their grovelling superstitions, in their instincts of idleness and self-indulgence, in their desperate propensity to gambling, the Spaniards have not a right to throw all or most of the blame on the precept and practice of their temporal rulers and spiritual advisers; whether all that is good in them is not their own, and all the bad has not been wrought into them by kings and priests, and other rulers.

Could not, one may ask, King Alfonso in the first blush of his popularity have set his heart against the bull-ring by pointedly refusing to honour it with his presence? Could he not prevail on his priests to follow his example, and not be in readiness with bell and candle to administer the last sacraments to the men killed in the arena, hallowing as martyrs poor wretches "butchered to make a Spanish holiday?"

Could King Alfonso, or did any of his predecessors, or will any of his successors, ever proclaim that the

time for bull-fights is over, as it is for the combats of wild beasts or gladiators, for any show involving risk to human life, or cruelty to God's dumb creatures?

Alas! it has been too long the custom in Spain, as, I am afraid, in many other countries, to ground the sovereign authority on that worse than Machiavelian policy which consists in countenancing the idlest usages, pampering to the most depraved tastes, and ministering to the most ruthless propensities of the people committed to their guidance.

CHAPTER XIII.

SPRING IN MADRID.

Suddenness of the Spanish spring—The climate and the people—
Dryness of the air—Stunted vegetation—Influence of the
atmospheric changes on the habits of the Madrid population—
On their health and appearance—On their daily life—Beauty of
the women—Dark and fair—Spanish life in summer—At home
and abroad—Beggars.

THE Madrid winter was over at last—a winter without snow or ice, yet far longer and more severe than it would seem to have a right to be at this fortieth degree of north latitude. We had reached mid-April; we had fourteen hours of daylight, the sun blazed out in all its zenith glory, yet we could hardly say whether we were advancing towards summer or falling back into winter. Everything was, and had been for we could hardly say how many weeks, ready for “the bridal of the earth and sky,” but the air forbade the banns. Day after day, morning, noon, and night, the breeze from the Guadarrama mountains, chilled by deep snow, swept over us, keen as a razor-edge, finding its way to Don Diego’s

heart, and curdling up all the life-blood in his veins, as he crept along the footpath of his beloved Puerta del Sol, swathed to his very eyes in the ample folds of his cloak.

But all this was over now ; the wind veered round to the right quarter, the new moon set in with a few life-giving showers, a joy quite paradisiacal pervaded the still genial atmosphere. In the absence of the nightingale or cuckoo there was towards evening a chirping of sparrows, and the green of the chestnut leaves and the pink of the almond blossoms began to fringe the branches of the best-sheltered walks in the Prado.

Up to the 14th of the month we were shivering—on the 17th we began to swelter. The climate here, like everything else, is superlative. It becomes too hot the moment it ceases to be too cold—just as the people's faith passes from the extremes of blind bigotry to the excesses of senseless scepticism, and as their politics alternate between raving anarchy and uncompromising despotism. The Spaniard is never satisfied with saying "all" or "nothing" as other people do. The expression here is always "*absolutamente todo*"—" *absolutamente nada*." And Nature seems to abhor things by halves as intensely as man does. A door must be either shut or open ; if summer is to be let in it must be all at once, and in its unmitigated fierceness.

A three days' change in the temperature brings with it a thorough modification in the Spaniard's style of living. To bask in the open air and to make night of day and day of night, are here matters of choice as well as necessity, and yet even on such conditions life cannot be enjoyed without serious drawbacks. Contrary to the custom of most other southern localities, Madrid is in the main a city of broad streets and open spaces. Till very lately the town offered no shelter to the withering winds, and a few drops of rain turned the clayey soil of the Prado into a sea of mud. Since fair weather has blessed us, there is nothing to screen us from the sun or save us from the dust. The waters of the Lozoya Canal, brought into town, as I stated, by Queen Isabella II., at the heavy cost of £2,000,000, have made of Madrid a comparative oasis in the midst of this arid Castilian wilderness; but little is the good that all the streams from a hundred pumps and the showers from twice the number of watering-carts can do for us. A few of the *pollos*—young bloods, bucks, or dandies—of the place have laid aside their *abrigos*, or wrappers, and appear in summer frocks in the Paseo de Recoletos, and one or two of the twenty equipages that grace the ladies' mile at the Buen Retiro are open carriages. But it is only under great difficulties that one can venture out half-an-hour or so before sunset. There is nothing to subdue the torrid glare; and if one

looks down from the height of the arch at the Alcala Gate towards town, across the hollow or dip of the Prado and up the wide opening of Alcala Street—that open space which constitutes one of the grandest sites and sights of Madrid—appears wrapped in a maze of white dust, pervading everything like a thin gauze, and rising to the roofs of the tallest buildings. Trees there are in the squares, along many of the new streets, and double-lining the desolate avenues which may one day become the *boulevards* of the enlarged capital. Trees and groves and attempts at flower-beds, and low box, laurel, and hornbeam hedges, especially in many parts of that long promenade between the sloping main thoroughfares of the city—the Alcala, Geronimo, and Atocha streets—and the rising grounds of the Buen Retiro and the Barrio of Salamanca, to which I have often alluded; but trees in Madrid do not always mean shade. Hardly a bush grows here, except in spite of nature, and by dint of immense expense, trouble, and patience.

The time was, we are told, when the whole region surrounding this spot was one vast forest; the city having grown round the hunting-box which the Emperor, Charles V., had built, in consideration of the sport which the site, with its dense plantations, afforded. But the country in all its extent, as far as the eye can compass it from the Alcazar, is now as bare as my hand; brown or tawny for nine months in the year,

and only green now with the teeming wheat-crops of its ill-tilled, though by no means barren fields.

But no tree here can come into life, unless you dig a grave for its cradle ; unless you bed it deeply into the rich mould, and screen it and water it, and collect in a hole around it the artificial moisture, which the niggardly heavens deny it. For it should be borne in mind that the average rainfall in Spain is barely one-fourth of what it is in Italy—even in south Italy.

With every care and precaution, and even in the lowest and most sheltered nooks, the trees seldom thrive, and have to be kept alive by endless pruning, lopping, and cropping, leaving little more than the bare stems, and a few ragged branches, which the wind tears and the sun parches before the sap has time to reach them.

To some few specimens of evergreen, the pine and the cypress, the earth is somewhat less stepmotherly, and nothing can well exceed the beauty of the half-dozen deodaras, sweeping with their branches the few square feet of lawn, which an incessant deluge of water coaxes out of the ground on the square before the Picture Gallery ; or the luxuriance of some exotics, which scientific industry has reared in the adjoining Botanic Gardens. But anywhere else the vegetation is irreclaimably scraggy and mangy ; the thirst of the

porous soil growing, as it were, with every drop by which man attempts to slake it. How a climate, which thus exhausts and kills plants, may suit human beings, I cannot undertake to say ; but the truth is that many of the natives manage to flourish here, though strangers, even if they escape consumption or dysentery, complain of dyspepsia and languor, and droop and fall into dumps, which neither the bright sky nor the elastic air has power to relieve. But it is especially at this time of the year that the Spanish race shows to the best advantage—the proud, dignified bearing, the fine features, the manliness of one sex ; the nameless grace, the tender expression, the loveliness of the other.

Summer is for these gay birds the moulting season. Winter brings round and renovates them.

Travel through Spain at the end of summer, in October or November, and you will see nothing but faded cheeks and wasted forms ; for there is no escape from the heat, and it allows little healthy rest or exercise day or night. But come to Madrid between March and May, and you will find dames and damsels re-created by their five or six months' hibernation ; hot-house flowers which their glass-cases have screened from the nipping blast, tended and pampered, and which now expand in this first breath of warm air into a bloom hardly surpassed in any other climate.

Walk into the Paseo de Recoletos, between the Cibeles and Castellana fountains, where at even-fall the citizens' wives and daughters sweep with the *frou-frou* skirts of their stiff rustling dresses the flags of the main alley—or ramble among the pyramidal pines of the Buen Retiro towards the gimcrack feudal castle, whence you have the view of the open plain and of the culminating spot which they call “the heart of all Spain”—and where the ladies of the grandee families seek relief from the turmoil of their thronged carriages—and then tell us whether even Hyde Park Corner in all its glory can exhibit anything to surpass the flashing eyes, the rich complexions, the elegant figures that confront you almost every step.

Is this Spain? Are these merely the slender, snake-like shapes, the gipsy faces, the raven hair of which centuries of African domination have left indelible traces? Are those dazzling white necks, those golden or deep auburn tresses, those stately figures—all that Titianesque flesh and blood, so frequently intermixed with darker hues—characteristic of Moorish descent.

Ah no! For the purity of the Gothic race still asserts itself through many generations; and here it still reigns, uncommon but not less valued, nurtured by indoor life, heightened but not seared by atmos-

pheric influences, blended but not tainted by the admixture of other breeds.

Notwithstanding the hardihood and endurance of which the men, when put to it, are still capable—notwithstanding the parched, baked, and withered look of the generality of the suffering classes—female beauty in Madrid, as in Cadiz and Seville, will, under proper management, combine all the vividness and fire which are considered conventionally Spanish, with much of the softness, the fairness and luxuriance which are claimed as the peculiar gifts of more northern latitudes.

If the high-bred brunette, who is just alighting from yon ducal carriage, heading a family group of which she is the pride, strikes you as rather too dusky and skinny for your ideal, look at the tall and portly milk-white, bare-headed, be-laced and be-coralled Asturian nurse following her mistress with the youngest scion of the house in her arms, and you will soon judge whether a country which exhibits such a scale of hues, such a variety of shapes, such a contrast of styles, may have enough to suit the most fastidious taste.

To evade the heat of the torrid months which May ushers in, the Spaniards know no other expedient than darkness and seclusion throughout the day, and

outdoor existence till very late hours in the night. The noisy, reeking cafés, which, unlike those of Paris or Milan, have no *al fresco* rows of benches and tables outside, are exchanged for the cane or iron-wire armchairs in the Salon del Prado—that miscalled “meadow,” an open gravel waste where not one blade of grass grows. Here the men—the gentlemen, as we may say—sit and smoke and spit; and the ladies sit and flutter their fans, and all chat and chaff and flirt hour after hour, this having more charm for them than even the play in their open-air theatres, or even the butchery at the bull-ring.

From the Prado, at a later hour, and as the season advances, the *élite* of these idle loiterers will drag themselves as far as the Buen Retiro Gardens, a spot decked out as a kind of Cremorne or Tivoli, sacred to “*Promenade* Concerts,” which the well-dressed classes sit through, panting and gasping, and consuming ice-lemonade; while the lower orders crowd together at the Apollo Gardens, cooling themselves as they best can with those blood-stirring “galops” and “Lancers” which have long, even here, superseded the more graceful and modest native *bolero* and *cachucha*.

Presently, however, even what the Spaniards call “summer” will set in, and then Madrid life will become

unendurable to all who can fly from it. These will then be found far away from home, at the sea-baths of Biscay or Guipuzcoa, the civil war permitting; otherwise, in that "little Spain" of Biarritz or St. Jean de Luz, where hostile political parties herd together like lions and lambs, a limbo of fugitives, consuls, and spies, where sullen French gendarmes are at no little pains to keep the peace between Carlists and Cabrerists, between Radicals and Ultramontanes, between renegades, demagogues, priests, croupiers and rogues.

Wherever these *Gatos Madrileños*, as they call themselves — always merry as kittens — may go, however, it seems as if they could scarcely enjoy themselves unless they had their poor with them. It would be easier in these countries to cure the receivers than the givers of alms. Mendicancy in Roman Catholic communities has religious roots, which lay civilisation will never have power to tear up. A few vile coppers, lavished among sturdy rascals, a Spaniard thinks will purchase indulgence for any amount of sins. Hence, besides the doors of the churches, the entrance to the theatres, to the bull-ring, the promenades and all places of entertainment are the rendezvous of all the tatterdemalions. "Suffer the rascals to come to me, and hinder them not," says the Spaniard, when in cash and in a good humour; when penniless

himself or out of sorts, he bows politely to the black-guard and says, "*Perdoneme Vd. por Dios, Hermano*" (for heaven's sake, sir, my brother, forgive me!) which means, "I have nothing for you."

CHAPTER XIV.

A GREAT ANNIVERSARY.

The 67th Dos de Mayo—The Spanish War of Independence—
Historical parallels—The heroes of 1808—Their monuments—
The order of the festivity—Attitude and disposition of the
multitude—An open grave in Madrid—The contrast between
two pictures—Spanish notions of honour and justice.

THE day after May-day is Spain's own anniversary. It brings round the date of the outbreak of the War of Independence; a war in which Spain achieved so much glory that she need not, one would think, claim more than her fair share of it. The Spaniards did not, as they fondly believe, at that juncture, "break the power of the first Napoleon, and accomplish the deliverance of Europe." Beyond all question, however, the Spaniards—as a nation—fought well; and although it is clear that by her own unaided efforts Spain would never have rid herself of the Invader, it is equally evident that this latter could nowhere have held one inch of her territory outside the walls of large cities, or away from the main thoroughfares.

The incident of the memorable day are soon told.

The French, led by Murat, had crossed the Pyrenees, in March, 1808, as Spain's allies against Portugal; they had established their head-quarters at Madrid, where a large force of its native garrison was still lodged. Between the soldiers of the two nations, and between the people and their foreign guests, no good blood could arise, especially as the French officers made themselves at home as in a conquered territory, and Murat made no mystery of his master's intention to annex the Peninsula to his Imperial domains.

The imbecile King, Charles IV., had abdicated, and his son, Ferdinand VII., now titular King, was away in France, in Napoleon's power; but some of the royal princes, among them Don Carlos and Don Francisco, had been left behind; and it was now understood that these also were to be taken from the Alcazar, and sent to share their father's and brother's captivity.

The sight of the travelling-carriage driven up to the palace door, ready for the journey, aroused the pent-up passions of the populace. A fearful riot ensued, a kind of Sicilian Vespers, beginning with the slaughter of defenceless Frenchmen, but ending with the dispersion of the mob, and the submission of the city magistrates, who accepted a truce on Murat's own terms.

By these terms it was agreed that the Spanish troops should leave the town, and their posts and barracks should be delivered to their French "allies."

At the Monteleon barracks, where a park of artillery was lying, two artillery officers, Daoiz and Velarde, refused to obey orders ; and, seconded by an infantry officer, named Ruiz, and by some of the populace, drew out their field-pieces, and attempted to hold the barracks against the French. Their resistance, however, was soon overpowered. Ruiz fell, mortally wounded ; Daoiz and Velarde were found dead on the cannon by which they had stood alone to the last.

On the following day Murat led out several scores of prisoners taken in the popular affray, and shot them on a spot in the Prado, facing the entrance of the Carrera Geronimo.

The immediate result of the unequal contest was precisely what might have been anticipated. It was a struggle between a well organised and disciplined force, and a town in which both the civil and military authorities were for peace at any price, and the people, abandoned to themselves, fought for their own hand, disavowed and discountenanced by those who should have been their leaders.

It was the case of Moscow in 1611 and of Genoa in 1746 ; with this difference, that the people of the first city rid themselves of their Polish foes, and those

of the second drove out their Austrian invaders, while at Madrid the native combatants were overpowered, and the French both quelled and punished the insurrectionary attempt.

Fortunately for the honour of Spain, the affair did not end in the capital. A stubborn spirit of resistance, with war to the knife, was kindled throughout the provinces. The whole country was up in arms; Gerona, Saragossa, and other places held out with rare prowess, though with doubtful success, till Wellington came up from Portugal, and restored the balance in the struggle, ending, as the world knows, in the final expulsion of the French and the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty.

Upon the re-instalment of the Bourbons, in 1815, the nation, then awakening to generous and liberal aspirations, determined that honours should be paid to the heroes of the *Dos de Mayo*. The spot in the Prado, where Murat had shot his prisoners, became known as the "Field of Loyalty," and in its centre it was decreed that a monument should be reared, the foundations of which were laid in 1812, but which never rose from the ground till 1840, when it was "completed by the M. H. (*Muy Heroica*) City of Madrid, in the palmy days of Isabella's constitutional reign.

The monument consists of an obelisk, standing on

a sarcophagus-shaped pedestal, supporting allegorical statues, with inscriptions illustrative of the tragic events of 1808, and the names of Daoiz and Velarde on a medallion, encompassed by a wreath of oak-leaves, the whole surrounded by an iron railing, enclosing the blood-stained field, which is planted with cypresses, and laid out in shrubs and flower-beds.

More recently, after the fall of Isabella, another monument was erected facing the gateway—all that remains of the building—of the old Monteleon barracks, a monument representing Daoiz and Velarde in the act of loading and firing their cannon, and bearing, besides an inscription recording those officers' valour, a few lines by the greatest of modern Spanish poets, Espronceda, execrating "the memory of the base and selfish dynasty, which requited the devotion and bravery of so many heroes and martyrs by an endless conspiracy against the people's hard-won liberties."

This inscription, placed there by the Revolution, had not, up to May 2nd, 1875, been interfered with by the Restoration.

The festivity by which the recurrence of the 2nd of May is celebrated is styled a *Fiesta Civico-Religiosa*. Three altars are raised at the foot of the monument of the Field of Loyalty, at which, from sunrise to noon, masses are said for the eternal repose of the victims. At 9 a.m., the Corporation of the city meet

at the Town Hall in the Calle Mayor, and form in procession, preceded by a picket of mounted Civil Guards, and consisting, first, of all the paupers from the town asylums and the charity children; then of the Invalids and the militia; next of the relatives and descendants of the victims of the Dos de Mayo; after these come the Alcaldes or Mayors of the various wards or districts of the city; the King with his Staff and household; the army and navy officers; the high functionaries of the State; deputations from the provinces; finally, the magistrates of the city, preceded by mace-bearers in the costume of the knave of clubs in an old pack of cards, with the Captain-General and Director of the Artillery on either side of the Alcalde Mayor, or mayor of mayors.

The procession, issuing into the Calle Mayor, follows its line of march to the Church of St. Isidro, the patron saint of Madrid, where it finds High Mass and the Cardinal Primate ready to receive it. It hears mass, listens to an oration delivered by the local parish priest, after which, by a long *détour* of many streets, the *cortège* reaches the inevitable Puerta del Sol, and descends by the Calle Alcalá to the Prado, where it is joined by the parochial clergy, reaching, at last, between two and three in the afternoon, the "Field of Loyalty," lately re-baptized "Field of Glory"—loyalty being now out of fashion.

The 2nd of May, in 1875, fell on a Sunday, so that the *fiesta* was not, as in other years, "so much gained by the people upon the enemy"—their daily work. But it was, at all events, a day set apart for enjoyment, and stout was their determination to make the most of it.

From early sunrise—say between five and six—I had with me long lines of well-dressed and better-behaved traders and artisans of the lower classes, invading the groves and glades of the Buen Retiro, that glorious park which was now a mass of dewy young leaves and blossoms, and which on ordinary mornings I had all to myself, or which I was left to share with the nightingale, the cuckoo, and quail. By this time the accesses to the "Field" were beset with gay yet earnest and reverent crowds, the women on their knees, the men hat in hand, attending their early, open-air masses. As day advanced, and long before noon, the double rows of chairs in the Prado were eagerly invaded by all who did not mind the half-real (or $2\frac{1}{2}d.$) hire; and infinite was the chattering and bantering by which the good-humoured multitude whiled away the hours of weary waiting. Patience and unflinching endurance of the blazing sun had their reward in the long lines of paupers, of gentlemen in black, of officers in uniform, filing before them in slow progression, and in the array of soldiers

marching past, not without spirit, but rather in indifferent order.

Poor as, to say the truth, the show was, it was, at all events, a sight and a gathering. The people, if delighted with nothing else, were pleased with themselves; and, as all was over at three, the bull-ring opened at four, and after the bull-fight the cafés had their tables ready, and after dinner there were fifteen theatres open—little fault could be found with the pleasures which the people were either offered *gratis*, or which all could obtain, each to the extent of his purse's length. How many out of that thronging multitude bestowed a thought on Daoiz and Velarde, it would be difficult to say. The newspapers appearing with a black edge, and the hand-bills hawked about in profusion, left no one in ignorance of the deeds of which this is the commemoration. But a twice-told tale is apt to pall on a frivolous populace; and the high-flown, bombastic style in which the exploits of 1808 were described in these prints, contrasted too sadly with the feelings of the better classes of the present generation, who saw so many thousands of the youth of the country, and so vast an amount of the country's wealth wasted in Navarre and Cuba, in struggles in which the whole power of Spain seemed to make so little headway against mere handfuls of Carlist or filibuster enemies.

Happily for the Madrid people there were not many of them who felt inclined to dwell on unpleasant subjects, and the great wonder of wonders of the day was after all to see so many people, who, in the midst of their country's misery, and under the threat of imminent bankruptcy, still had the heart and found the money for all those pleasures and luxuries—and to think of the Government, which, pressed for reinforcements by the commanders in the north, east, and centre, still kept here unemployed 8,000 or 10,000 men, to be made a show of in a city pageantry, in a place where so many civil guards, city police, *serenos*, or watchmen, and other guardians of the day and night, ought to make the preservation of public order altogether independent of the military.

For my own part, as, at about 3 p.m., the crowd had all dispersed, and I saw myself almost alone near the Field of Glory, I was reminded of a painful duty of which I had long put off the fulfilment, and I walked to Atocha to visit an open grave.

In the Atocha church, which the Spaniards seem bent on raising to the honours of another Westminster Abbey, together with other distinguished generals and statesmen—among them Castaños and Rios Rosas—the body of Juan Prim lay still unburied. Here it was that, at the close of December, 1871, he was brought, still bleeding, and here he was laid in state, the first

object which, three days later, met the eye of the monarch of his choice—that Amadeo whom many persons have now designated as “Un Rey demasiado decente para nosotros Españoles” (Too respectable a King for us Spaniards).

That King had come and gone: two or three republican Governments had been set up and pulled down, and another King was now on the throne; but Prim, after the lapse of more than four years, still lay in state, and his grave was still open. The Madrid Government, as I learnt from the papers, “had issued orders that a monument carved in Paris in honour of the Conde de Reus, should be allowed to pass the frontier free from customs duty.” That monument, however, was executed at the expense of the Marshal’s widow, the Duchess of Prim, and had nothing to do with the “Mausoleum” by which the nation *intended* to honour Prim’s memory, but which will probably only add to the materials for that thoroughfare which, we know, is paved with good intentions.

In the meanwhile Prim’s body lay in Atocha, in its coffin above ground, awaiting its final destination, which seems still undecided.

It was not without difficulty that I, by good fortune, found a verger—a lame one—who was not off with all the rest to the *fiesta*, and who led me along a corridor or cloister, on the right of the church which

separates the sacred building from what was once the monastery, now used for invalid soldiers. I went through a first burial chamber where some of the minor Bourbon princes, not deemed worth removing to the Escorial, lie in niches in the wall, with distinguished men, as in a Columbarium, and hence to an inner tapestried chamber, fitted out exclusively for the Catalan hero.

The coffin, with all its mournful trappings, had been conveyed here, and laid on the stone pavement, in the state in which it was exposed for several days on the floor of the church; the body, in his full dress uniform, with all the chivalrous orders on his breast. All round the walls were hung the crowns, wreaths, trophies, and devices in golden letters, by which private persons and public bodies—King Amadeo and his Queen, the cities of Spain, the staff of the army, the widowed duchess and the marshal's domestic servants—had paid the last homage to the deceased.

In the midst of all this mass of slowly-mouldering frippery, the corpse lay still and calm, the face exhibiting, when the lid was raised, hardly any perceptible trace of decay, or indeed any semblance of death, except its wan paleness, and rigidly settled expression.

To those who knew him well, the whole soul of Prim was still living in those stiff, motionless features—the stern resolution, the strong sense, the warm, affec-

tionate temperament, the sly humour of the man—the man, take him for all in all, who alone was equal to the task of ruling Spain, and who might, had he lived, have borne her safely through the throes of her revolutionary period.

The grave of Prim is still open ; but it will be closed, however late, only too long before the account to which his country ought to have called the perpetrators of the dastardly deed which cut him off in the prime of manhood. The proceedings by which the assassins of the Marshal were to be brought to justice have been indefinitely adjourned. The prosecuting magistrate has been at work for all these years. Suspected culprits or accomplices and important witnesses have been promiscuously and indiscriminately, after the Spanish fashion, kept in prison for months, for years. Huge folio volumes of reports have been piled up several fathoms deep ; but no result has ever been, or ever will be published ; nothing made known about the assassination in the Calle del Turco—a murder committed at an early hour of the evening, close to the most frequented thoroughfare of a well-lighted city, in a quarter swarming with watchful police agents—a murder in which 'as many as a score of chief actors were engaged, to which twice as many accessory criminals were privy, and the instigators of which have long been unerringly designated by public report.

Prim fell, and in the first paroxysm of anguish and fury, what would not the Madrid population—the Spanish nation—have done to wreak vengeance on the assassins? But a day passed and the cold fit succeeded; nothing was done to visit their guilt with just, deliberate punishment. Surely the execution of Prim's murderers would have done Spain more good than could ever be looked for from the working of all her ultra-radical constitutions, or from any of the republics to which the last charter, that of 1869, was a stepping-stone. Not many months after Prim's life was taken, those of King Amadeo and his Queen were attempted, and this time several of the King's would-be murderers were taken in the act, one of them still grasping the smoking blunderbuss which he had fired at the royal carriage; and Admiral Topete declared in the Chamber that he had been forewarned of all the particulars of the projected outrage; adding that he had been bound to secrecy, and HONOUR forbade him to name names! No evidence of the guilt can be traced to its notorious perpetrators; and even those who were taken red-handed, as they could not be openly acquitted or dismissed, were allowed, if not compelled, to break from prison, that they should tell no tales.

What opening can there be for freedom, where every path is thus closed against justice?

Book II.

A SPANISH TOUR.

1879-1882.

CHAPTER I.

MADRID TO LISBON.

My fourth and last journey to Spain—The route to Portugal—Southern Spanish Railways—Spanish mountains and rivers—The Tagus and the Guadiana—The plain—Mancha and Estremadura—Dismal look of the country—Sights on the route—Fellow-passengers—The frontier—Badajoz to Elvas—First impression of Portugal—Spaniards and Portuguese.

AFTER an absence of nearly four years (June 1875 to February 1879), I undertook my fourth, and, in all probability, last visit to Spain. This time, however, my journey had no political object, and I came under different auspices. Spain had been at peace for four years, under the rule of the same King and Cabinet. The country was going through a period of halcyon days, and her annals were comparatively silent, as are those of all happy, peaceful, and well-ordered communities. It was with other views that I now travelled across the Pyrenean border; and, as at that season I found the Madrid climate unusually severe, I took the train to the south, as a knight-errant of

old would have mounted his steed, little knowing or little caring whither his good chance might take him.

It had happened twice before during my stay in the Peninsula, that, weary of the sameness of Madrid life, I had sought relief in a short run to Portugal. I set out now in the same direction, but for a different purpose.

The distance from Madrid to Lisbon, by the only railway practicable in 1879, was 546 miles, and we got over it in two nights and one day. It was in that same year shortened by 60 miles, or about five hours; but this left ample room for further reduction.

The first attempt at a railway in Spain was a short southern line of 49 kilomètres to Aranjuez—a mere toy line, intended to convey the Court to the royal seat on the Tagus.

From Aranjuez the line followed the course of the Tagus to Castillejo, whence it threw out a short branch to Toledo. But from Castillejo the main line proceeded to the south to Alcazar San Juan on the Guadiana, where the line again divided. One line followed a southern course to Albacete and Chinchilla, whence its various south-eastern branches reached the Mediterranean shores at Valencia, Alicante and Cartagena; but another line from Alcazar ran to the south-

west to Manzanares, which became another great junction; one of its lines, that of Andalusia, went south to Cordova, Malaga, and Granada, and southwest to Cordova, Seville, and Cadiz.

But again, from Manzanares another line followed the course of the Guadiana to Ciudad Real, Merida, and Badajoz, and this became in time the route to Portugal. By running a new direct line from Castillejo to Ciudad Real in 1879, the distance between Madrid and the latter place was reduced from 263 to 170 kilometres.

The Iberian Peninsula, as the reader is aware, is crossed latitudinally by several almost parallel chains of mountains, from which spring its greatest watercourses. Only one of these, the Ebro, runs eastward; four others, the Douro, Tagus, Guadiana, and Guadalquivir, flow from east to west, and all but the last-named cross the frontier of Portugal.

We followed the course of the Guadiana through the territory of La Mancha and Estremadura. The course of the Guadiana is almost parallel to that of the Guadalquivir, the long range of the Sierra Morena separating the two valleys throughout their length. But the Guadalquivir is Spanish from its source to its estuary. The Guadiana enters Portugal between Badajoz and Elvas, and flows through it till it becomes a frontier stream at its mouth.

Both valleys are broad and level and of equal fertility; but the Andalusian provinces, though bare and arid, are among the least uncultivated and uninhabited of all Spanish regions, while there is absolutely nothing to relieve the dreariness of the Manchegan and Estremeñan plains. The land, "denuded of trees," is still, as it was described many years ago, "swept over by the cutting wintry blasts and scorched by the calcining summer heat; the dust impregnated with saltpetre, and the fierce glare of the sun, blind the eyes, wearied with the prospect of uniform misery and a grievous want of anything worth notice, either in man or his works, or in the nature with which he is surrounded."

It was for a country like this that the railway was invented. We were not quite stifled by the heat, nor quite starved by the uneatable food at the refreshment-rooms, as all our Madrid friends had predicted; but we were certainly not sorry that our rate of travelling allowed us to see as little as possible of our route besides the railway-stations.

Who could tarry even for twelve hours on such a journey if steam could urge him on at a quicker rate?

Neither the battlemented walls of Ciudad Real, nor the hoary and desolate yet marvellous aqueducts and other ruins of old Roman Merida, nor the sunny

slopes and white palaces of Badajoz, as they shone so gloriously before us down in the valley, mirroring themselves in the deep waters of the Guadiana, will tempt the wayfarer from his railway-station, which affords him the only civilised haven in the midst of all that wilderness of squalor and misery. Those cities which seem so bright and so tempting as you look up to or down upon them from your carriage-window, every traveller is anxious to assure you, are only whited sepulchres. Inside, if you venture into them, you find nothing but dulness, dirt, and solitude, swarms of beggars, empty convents, poverty-stricken habitations.

The passengers you take up and set down from station to station, are no bad specimens of the people among whom you would have to mingle were you to alight. Monday is market-day in many of the towns, and men of business, as well as peasants and artisans, were stepping in and out of the train with incessant vicissitude.

That dapper young gentleman in a fine town-dress, and who was shaved no later than the day before yesterday, is, as he hastens to inform us, the *juez*, or magistrate of the district. The long-shanked individual in a thread-bare jacket, holding an ivory-pommelled cane, talking so loudly and gesticulating so wildly, is by profession, as we hear from himself,

a newspaper agent and bad debt-collector at Badajoz, and he has been to Castuera to bear a taper at the burial of an old notary, on whose young and well-jointured widow, he gives us slyly to understand—for all these Southern people are extremely communicative, and tell their private affairs unasked, as if wearing their hearts on their sleeve—he, as a friend of the house, has long harboured premature pretensions.

Stop! Here comes up at Medellin a whole family, with tickets for Villa-Gonzalo—a whole family and whole household; for they are evidently flitting from a sheep-farm in one place to a swine-farm in another, and all their furniture and domestic establishment, in huge boxes, bundles, pots and pans, are thrust into our railway-carriage, with great risk to our shins and elbows—a fat mistress, a very much sat-upon husband; a yokel, their son; a stout lass, their daughter; and a Maritornes-like dairy-maid with a squalling infant—all stowed in upon us, “hoping we should not be too inconveniently crowded;” for the fat woman is a crony of the guard, who assures us that “there was no room in the third-class carriages, and that they are *muy de bien* people, and it will only be till the next station but two.”

Between Badajoz and Elvas there is a fifty minutes' journey.

I had sent my passport to the Portuguese Consul

at Madrid, inquiring whether his *visa* was required. "It can do no harm," answered that worthy functionary, and it certainly did him this good, that it put 28 reals of mine into his pocket; but he might as well have said that neither *visa* nor passport was required, for nothing was asked at Elvas, and the custom-house did not detain us half-an-hour.

Elvas and its flourishing orange and olive grounds were a very great improvement upon the dreary country we had left behind us.

The town and famous, formidable fortress, which we surveyed from the station as the sun was nearly setting in the valley beneath, had a picturesque appearance; and, altogether, Portugal—as much as we could see of it before night closed in—its olive-clad hills and oak forests, and frequent villages, contrasted cheerily with the bare desolation which had weighed on our hearts in the sister kingdom. The people who drew near and sauntered past our train at the station were not unlike, and yet very far from like, Spaniards. It is easy to say that the Portuguese is only a dialect of the Spanish language, and that the people of the two countries understand one another when each of them is using his own idiom. But it is a fallacy. Portuguese and Spanish are dialects of the same language, but not more intelligible to the people of the two countries than Spanish and Italian; and the

intonation is even more peculiar. The Portuguese is not half so loud and demonstrative as his Spanish cousin. The voice is pitched in a lower, dulcet, mincing tone which General Milans del Bosch, Prim's friend and our friend, caricatured at the Casino del Principe till he made us all at the club nearly die with laughter. The outspoken, haughty, fearless, yet courteous and dignified address and demeanour of the Spaniard do not reach beyond the frontier; and the sudden change does not prepossess the traveller in favour of the new race among whom he mingles and whom he feels tempted to set down as a sly, dull and not very manly set. One soon sees enough of the Portuguese to do them fuller justice. But I wrote down that first impression because it was genuine, and it did not wear out through the night during our two hours' stoppage at the *entroncamento*, or junction, whence in the morning the train whisked us along that lovely "slice of Paradise," the green casket in which the pearl, Lisbon, is set.

Whoever travels to any purpose about the world cannot be long in finding out how much easier it is for men to hate than to love one another. An ancient sage has told us that "concord is rare among brothers." What if the brothers be neighbours besides? What if they know very little, and understand

absolutely nothing of each other? Name any two European nations you please, and you will not find upon any with so little intercourse between them at the Spanish and Portuguese. Necessity brings them as little together as inclination. Tied as they are back to back, they find it impossible to look into each other's face or to get into each other's way. Intended by nature to form one happy country, they were sundered by circumstances entirely beyond their own control in remote ages, and were never brought together, except once by the right of the stronger over the weaker, since which time the mutual feeling between them has been on one side the instinct of the big fish to swallow the little fish, and on the other the natural objection of the little fish to be devoured.

Never were the two people more hopelessly estranged than since that Spanish revolution of 1868, which threatened to bring them together in the bonds of family unity. Both have now recovered from their Iberian fears and hopes. The Spaniards are fully aware, that the annexation of Portugal could only further complicate the bewilderment of their chronic chaos. The Portuguese feel safe in their resolution to fight for independence, and also in the hope that England "would not let them fight alone." But the mere shadow of a past danger on the one side, and the

smart of disappointed greed on the other, are sufficient to keep suspicion awake and to foster antipathy. The chance, however distant, of material amalgamation, aggravates the moral severance and repulsion.

The Spaniards and Portuguese would dislike each other less if they took the trouble to inquire into the causes of their mutual aversion. They seem to be afraid of too great a resemblance between them, though to an unconcerned stranger nothing is more striking than their dissimilarity.

I have already said that hardly anything can be imagined more unlike than the harsh but energetic gutturals of the Spanish to the nasal twang of the Portuguese. But the physiognomy of the two races presents even more remarkable contrasts. The Spaniard is impetuous, self-asserting, cordial, outspoken. The Portuguese is slow and deliberate, self-concentrated, obliging on second thoughts, but instinctively guarded and distant. If he speaks English ever so little, he is Anglicised, waits for an introduction, and his conversation reveals a strange mixture of shrewd sense and deep-seated prejudice. Not quite satisfied with himself, he has no lively sympathies with his fellow beings; least of all, with his neighbours. There is nothing stronger than the Spaniard's frank contempt of the Portuguese; nothing more sly than the sneering com-

placence with which the Portuguese pities the Spaniard, bewailing calamities for which the sufferer has only himself to blame, and sagely reflecting that the ocean has no perils for those who do not venture out of harbour.

CHAPTER II.

LISBON.

Lisbon as it might have been—The chances she has lost—Lisbon as it is—The consequences of the great earthquake—The situation of the City—The pro and contra of a hilly ground—The wealth of Lisbon—Its resources—Portuguese mushrooms—Brasileros—Curiosities of the place—Its environs.

It would be difficult to imagine what city might have risen at the mouth of the Tagus, if any of the three Philips, under whom the two kingdoms of this Peninsula were brought together for 60 years (1580-1640), had ever thought of transferring their seat of government to Lisbon.

At the time the union was effected, Madrid had only been a few years a royal residence; and the disadvantages of its site were still so strongly felt, that the project of a removal back to Toledo, Valladolid, or Seville, was repeatedly entertained. On the other hand, Lisbon had been a capital for several hundred years, and for a long period in the sixteenth century it had almost the monopoly of the world's maritime and

commercial enterprise. Of all the westward-looking seaports, just when westward-ho had become the watch-word all over Europe, Lisbon was the grandest, the safest, and most frequented. It was the main gate to the East and West Indies, the great highway to that Empire of the son of Charles V. on which, it was said without boast, the sun never set. It had the finest position outside the Mediterranean, rivalling the beauty of Genoa and Naples, and exceeding the importance of declining Venice and enslaved Constantinople.

On the other hand, though there had been wars between Spain and Portugal, though the instinct of nationality was already powerfully developed in the latter country, the tendency to the agglomeration of small states into large monarchies had everywhere become irresistible; and, although Philip II. appears in our eyes a loathsome tyrant, his strength of will, his kingly craft, and his very bigotry, were not without prestige over the congenial minds of his equally benighted contemporaries. Though Spain was already beginning to feel the fatal effects of his withering rule, Portugal had not fared much better under the last Princes of the "Bastard" House of Burgundy, and had not suffered less from the persecution and expulsion of the Jews, the instalment of the Inquisition, and the baneful influence of the Jesuits.

We have seen how little the secular animosities between Scotch and English stood in the way of the union of Great Britain, even though the capital of the minor kingdom had to lose the splendour of a court and to sink to the condition of a provincial city. How much more easily would the Scotch have been reconciled to the transaction, had it been possible to establish the centre of the United Kingdom at Holyrood?

That is, however, what would have happened in the Peninsula, if Lisbon had been made the Iberian capital; for the pride of Portugal would have been gratified by the elevation of the minor kingdom to the dignity of the Sovereign State. The boundaries of the two countries, nowhere traced visibly by natural landmarks, would have been speedily obliterated, and the immense advantage of maritime communication for a State ruling over Italy, the Netherlands, and the Colonies, would have more than counterbalanced the importance of the central position of that dreary Madrid—a centre of which it could only be said that it was inconveniently equidistant from every point in the circumference.

It was not destined; and it is idle to attempt to write the history of "what might have been."

Even at the head of a kingdom of four millions, Lisbon has all the aspect and pretensions of a great

capital. It rejoices in one of the grandest, strongest, and most picturesque situations ; and boasts a genial, as well as a perfectly healthy southern climate. Without one thoroughfare of imposing stateliness ; without one church, palace, or edifice of transcendent merit ; without a museum, a monument, a statue, or a picture worthy the attention of a traveller familiar with the wonders of Spain and Italy, Lisbon has more than enough to charm the eye, and to interest the mind of a visitor for a prolonged sojourn. Before 1755, this city, like Genoa, had no streets, but only hills. But in that year the earthquake did Lisbon all the good that fire often does for Constantinople : it made a gap through the maze of lanes and alleys ; it caused a depression between the hills, which was subsequently levelled and laid out into that half-dozen decent streets, round that truly magnificent "Black Horse Square," where one fancies himself in some stately quarter about the new Paris *boulevards*, or the Paddington and Westbourne Park districts in London.

For a man with sound lungs, and free from all apprehension of a disease of the heart, the hills, however, will have the chief attraction. Lisbon has all the panoramic variety and amenity of Genoa ; it has all the tawdriness of the churches ; all the gloom of the forsaken monasteries ; all the vestiges of a ubiquitous overgrown ecclesiastical establishment,

which in its downfall threatened to involve the city itself in its ruins, and which gives many of its remote and sequestered districts the look of a settled desolation and decay.

Nine out of ten streets in Lisbon are named from some of the saints, the Portuguese Calendar evidently admitting even some who are still awaiting papal canonisation. Like Constantinople, and all other rivals of Rome, Lisbon is described as "seated on the Seven Hills." But as one walks up and down its interminable labyrinth of steep paths, the impression rather is that the town straggles over two main ridges, broken up into seventy or more little knolls and bluffs, and parted by the deep gaps made 127 years ago by the earthquake.

Except in the immediate neighbourhood of the main square above-named, and along the artificially-widened quays of the golden Tagus, there is no flat ground but what has been smoothed down and terraced up by dint of hard work, and at a high cost. Lisbon is one of those towns which have risen in olden times in obedience to considerations of warlike defence, and in which men continue to crowd together from habit, from indifference to elbow room, from love of pure air, from attachment to a picturesque situation, with utter disregard of comfort—and are all the better for it.

For the necessity of clambering up and down causes a pressure on the lungs, which wrings out the exhausted air like water from a sponge—a healthy exercise, which, in southern climates, is the best preservative against the enervating influence of summer heat. Mountaineers are the salt of the earth; the backbone of the human race; and a man dwelling in Lisbon or Genoa must either be endowed by nature with wholesome Alpine instincts, or acquire climbing powers by daily practice, till he is brought to the condition of a wiry and sinewy Welsh or Highland pony.

And the horses in Lisbon are trained in the same hardening school; for one sees even the jades and screws put to hackney-carriages, by no means recommendable on the score of outward look, driven down long and fearfully abrupt slopes at a headlong pace, which terrifies the beholder, and takes away the breath of the “fare” inside the vehicle, yet so sure-footed, and held up by such masterly hands, that it never happened to me, in a fortnight or three weeks’ residence, to see one of them trip or slip, much less measure its length on the ground.

In spite of its irregularity, or perhaps because of it, Lisbon is pleasing to the eye inside as well as out.

Though at no time a bustling place, and at the time of my stay there labouring under the disadvantage of commercial depression, it never lacked animation;

the streets, without being inconveniently crowded, had that incessant stir of life and movement which befits a royal residence, and the river, that most splendid of European harbours, is enlivened, without being in the least encumbered, with ships. Its banks are free from the unsightly projection of docks and piers; and its marine stores, if there are any, are so conveniently stowed away out of sight as not to affect the most fastidious of our senses, or to interfere with the freshness and cleanliness, the brightness and sweetness of the marine picture.

What the business of Lisbon may be it would be difficult to say, for, in spite of its great historical traditions, and the advantages of its matchless situation, this city has no very extensive trade, and all the energy and thrift of Portugal seem concentrated in Oporto and the northern districts. Yet it is evident that, if this is not the place for men to work, it is the very spot they choose for the enjoyment of work's wages. Though there be little gain, there must be considerable wealth in Lisbon—wealth not accumulated in a few hands, but reaching some of the lower degrees in the social scale. The number of gentlemen's fine houses—not only clustering round such favourite spots as the Praça do Rocio, Paseio Publico, Praça do Principe Real, and the like, but scattered here and there in out-of-the-way quarters, and often in the midst of

mean hovels—away up the hills, along the quays, and where one would least look for them—appears to be altogether out of proportion with the population of the place, which barely exceeds 275,000, suburbs included.

But the fact is that Lisbon is the centre of the country's wealth, and is clad in all the glory of national industry, though it does not as largely contribute to its development, as the great cities of London, Paris, Vienna, or Berlin do to their respective nations. It has not laid aside the traditions, and rejoices in the remnants of its vast maritime empire. The resources of the place lie in the western isles and Madeira, in its colonial establishments on the east and west coasts of Africa, and its *pied-d-terre* in the East Indies, but, above all things, in the connexion it keeps up with the emancipated empire of Brazil—which is still the Portuguese oyster. All this makes Lisbon the centre of a commercial enterprise, only the final results of which are visible in the well-being of many who come back to rest from their labours, and to look for the safe investment of the outcome of their ventures.

It is mainly the wealth of these *Brasileros* (for so are called the Portuguese emigrants who settle here on their return from Rio Janeiro, Bahia, or Pernambuco), their wealth, gotten no one knows or asks how, that makes Lisbon what she is. By far the greatest number of them are natives of the fine districts of the Douro

and Minho ; and the ambition of these is to own a few acres of land, and to build a big house in the petty towns or villages which gave them birth. But those who bring back colossal fortunes, or who have in some degree been polished by foreign travel, who have caught up ideas and manners, and social wants and habits, from their intercourse with other races—men of a more stirring, fastidious, and aspiring disposition—disdain the obscurity of provincial repose, and are irresistibly attracted to the capital. Here, they trust, the glitter of their riches will be better appreciated ; it will make their way into that charmed circle of the upper ranks whose titles will be within their reach, whose somewhat faded splendour they will easily outshine, and whose graces and elegancies they will strive to copy.

The mansions and gardens of these *nouveaux riches* vastly outnumber in Lisbon the palaces of the old nobility, and a stranger is, on a superficial acquaintance, bewildered by the frequency of high-sounding names and handles to names ; and finds it difficult to discriminate between the genuine article and the mere counterfeit.

The effect, however, is not absolutely bad ; it gives the place a lustre and an importance altogether out of proportion with the extent of the kingdom, with the actual resources of the country, and with

the intellectual or artistic interest which brings custom to the hotels of other cities.

When one has admired the deep green of the tropical plants, freshened by the gushing fountains in the square gardens, when one has gazed at the broad and placid tide of the Tagus, and the reflection of the low range of hills that mirrors itself on the pure wave from the opposite bank, when one has seen the three grand coaches-and-four in which the ex-King Consort, Ferdinand, and his morganatic wife, with their suite, are conveyed in state to some morning concert—one has “done” Lisbon, and it is time to consult *Bradshaw* for a move; unless one cares for Court entertainments or for the few evening parties that titled “*Brasileros*” give, and to which, for lack of better company, people are invited to meet the said good-natured and self-immolating *bourgeois* ex-King Consort.

Of such museums as that of the Escola Polytechnica, of such curiosity-shops as the Royal Armoury, most travellers have had more than enough in other capitals. To see the Cathedral one should have come before the earthquake had half demolished, and the restorers more than half modernised it. The opera, theatres, and other entertainments are second rate—all second rate.

Cintra, Mafra, and other famous spots in the environs struck Byron, Beckford, and other youths fresh from England, as the most heavenly of earthly abodes; and they are certainly very lovely scenes; and the contrast of the brightness of their semi-tropical vegetation with the gloom of the parks those travellers had left behind them in their island homes, could not fail to call forth their enthusiasm. They had not yet seen Sorrento, or Capri, or the "Isles of Greece," or the blue waves of the Mediterranean. It was fortunate for Portugal that those poets spoke of its beauties under the spell of a first impression.

Nor will the church and cloister of Belem, whatever historical interest may be attached to those structures, and however picturesque may be their general effect, recommend themselves to the admiration of an unprejudiced stranger on the score of their artistic merit—not if he comes from Spain with the wonders of Burgos or Leon, Toledo or Seville, still deeply graven in his mind, or even if in Portugal itself he has previously seen the mediæval edifices of Alcobage and Batalha, and can compare the pure Gothic of the fourteenth century with the mixed style of the sixteenth.

Of all European nations the Portuguese are perhaps those who have achieved the least for the advancement of modern art. Their pretensions to a school of

painting of their own, and their reference to the master-pieces of an obscure, if not altogether mythical, artist whom they call the "Gran Vasco," have been made a theme of infinite ridicule by all impartial critics, and by none with more grace and spirit than by Mr. Oswald Crawford, Her Majesty's Consul at Oporto, the writer who, under the *nom de guerre* of La Touche, as well as under his own, has most diligently and most benevolently illustrated Portugal.

Apart from all comparisons, however, it must be readily admitted that Lisbon has charms of its own; and a sojourner of a week or a fortnight at the Hotel Braganza high up on the ravine, or at the Hotel Central close to the river bank, will always be remembered with pleasure, particularly if the visit occurred in fair spring weather, and with the hotel windows all well-opened sea-wards.

CHAPTER III.

MADRID AND LISBON.

Contrast between the two capitals—Spain and Portugal—Spanish and Portuguese—Characteristic differences—Political and geographic causes—Foreign influence—Mutual dislike of the two nations—Their ignorance of each other—Political storms in Spain—Calm and stagnation in Portugal—Sloth and inertness of the Portuguese—Their reliance on Gallego labour—The results of any nation's reliance on vicarious labour—A practical view of the Iberian scheme—An Iberian Zollverein.

THE impression that Lisbon makes upon any man fresh from Madrid should not be marred by any unnecessary delay on the road. You leave the Spanish capital in the evening; you reach Lisbon on the morning of the second day. The contrast is almost like that between London on the Derby day and London on a September Sabbath. Madrid is the city of noise. After Naples the noisiest of cities. From morning to evening, and, in the summer season, still more from evening till morning, the turmoil is incessant. The people's home is the street; their

business enjoyment. You find a throng in every thoroughfare; a racket in every café; a *queue* at the door of every theatre; a swarm at the Puerta del Sol; jostling streams of loungers up and down the sidewalks of Alcala and Geronimo streets; the endless roar of newspaper-boys and hawkers of lottery tickets; the *Correspondencia* or the *Lista Grande* perpetually dinned into your ears by merciless ruffians bawling at the top of their voices. Everywhere the display of wealth; the pomp of boundless luxury; strings of glittering carriages; the prancing of mounted officers; the toilettes of painted duchesses. The King in his coach-and-six, with his squadron of lancers and scarlet outriders; be vies of lovely women picking their steps daintily amid the rags of squalid beggars. Such are usually—and were in July, 1876—the features of everyday life in a city, the capital of a nation distracted by civil war, trodden by dictatorial anarchy, stared in the face by impending bankruptcy.

For the sins of reckless Madrid you would say that Lisbon is doing penance in sackcloth and ashes. There is nothing more lively or lovely than the perpetual smile of earth and sky in this estuary of the Tagus; nothing more sober or dull, serious and taciturn, than the look of the population who have their homes on its banks. With all her traffic of omnibuses and tramway cars, the city looks half dead

or asleep. The Portuguese are not a very hard-working people; but they scorn to be thought idle. It is, to judge from appearances, all toil and no play with them. Cafés they have, but few, and shabby, and ill-attended. And they have also theatres, but not thriving; though the free entrance is a temptation, and you pay for no ticket unless you want a seat. A bull-ring exists, but the performance is bloodless; it is like fish without the sauce; and has no attraction except for the disreputable. The promenade is a desert, for a fee is taken at the entrance, and your Portuguese is a man who takes care of his pence, and grudges the few reis on any other evening than Sunday. They have no Prado, no Fuente Castellana, no Retiro Gardens. The smooth waters of the Tagus vainly tempt them to pleasure-boating; neither the safety of their streets nor the heat of the weather, nor the moon or gas-light has power to entice them out of doors after nine or ten in the night. The blessings of a Liberal Government, of social order and religious peace, are not unappreciated; but there is no elation, no self-gratulation, nothing joyous or over-sanguine among these people. Their subdued tones, their bated breath, their quiet demeanour, appear inalterable. If a voice is raised, if vehement gestures or animated features give evidence of stirring passions; if anything approaching loud mirth or unseemly riot calls attention

to a group of persons, the passers-by merely shake their heads and observe: "They are Spaniards;" all ideas of disorder and disturbance being in Portuguese minds associated with their obnoxious neighbours.

The French are not popular in Spain, and the English are rather respected than loved in Portugal; yet such seems to be the influence exercised by each of the two great nations on the two divisions of the Iberian race that somehow in Lisbon I could almost fancy myself in London, or perhaps Edinburgh, while in Madrid I felt as if I was moving among a Latin, and less a French or North Italian, than a downright Neapolitan multitude.

Spain and Portugal, as I said, are nowhere separated by a natural line of frontier. You cross a little brook, the Cayad, between Badajoz and Elvas, an insignificant Rubicon of which you would vainly seek the name in the map, and there is nothing but the uniform of the custom-house guards to tell you that you are passing from one state into another; nothing in the costume, and little in the language, and that rather in the accent than in the dialect of the people. Yet there are hardly anywhere two races of men caring so little, or wanting so little—having so little to do with one another as the Spanish and Portuguese. With a soil fertile in the same produce, and industry in both

countries equally in its infancy, they have no commodities to interchange, no occasion for any commercial transactions. They are no travellers, as a rule; but when they leave home, they feel little curiosity to visit one another, even now, when the construction of a railway has made Estremadura a somewhat less dreary, forbidding, and dangerous region to traverse than it was a score of years ago. They are no readers, but, when they take up a book or a paper, it is not to each other's literature, but to the French or English press that they turn for instruction or entertainment. The coin current in Portugal—which has little of its own—is not the Spanish gold-piece, but the English sovereign; and the same rule applies to the circulation of ideas. French thought may exercise greater influence in Spain, and perhaps English in Portugal, but from one another the two countries would condescend to learn nothing. Such points of resemblance as exist between them may strike a stranger, but any likeness is stoutly denied on both sides.

The Portuguese have good reason to rejoice in the results of those tame and negative yet sterling qualities which have enabled them to avoid the rocks against which Spanish headlong enthusiasm has foundered. Politics in Portugal seldom run high. This is not a superlative people, to-day clamouring for “Dios, Patria,

y Rey," and to-morrow for "Los derechos inlegislables." The extreme parties of Miguelist Legitimists and Red Republicans are insignificant. The contest lies between so-called "Historical Progressists," and "Democratic Progressists," with probably as much difference between them as "'twixt tweedledum and tweedledee." Government and opposition change places with frequent alteration, borrowing from and following each other's policies; the "ins" and the "outs" giving and taking, avoiding violent conflict, though not free from rancour or jealousy, fretting or heart-burning.

As a constitutional kingdom, in short, Portugal makes upon me the impression of what the Americans would call a "one-horse State."

The irresistible blessings of a long-continued peace in Portugal have tended to tame and soften exuberant spirits and create a happy family, safe from any storms, and even proof against such sudden surprises as that by which the old hero, Saldanha, made his sunset of life ridiculous. A king not unpopular, a not unwise and not intolerant Government, a free but not very influential Press, a well-behaved, domestic middle-class, and an easily contented populace, contribute to insure this country an easy, uneventful life, a satisfactory though very slow progress, and a material well-being and public

confidence which, in ordinary times, keep up the shares of the National Debt at 52, or 53, while in distracted Spain they have often fallen to 15.

Uninterrupted order and a mild climate could do no less, and it can do no more. In Portugal there is little to stir up juvenile ambition, nothing to stimulate love of adventure. With such halcyon days as those the little kingdom has long been blessed, military and naval officers are mere monks in uniform. Politics in normal times are too flat to rouse youthful aspirations; and avarice, were it even an early passion, has no strong hold on a people of sober tastes, contented with cheap luxuries, and suffering from that general complaint of all southern communities—a “want of wants.”

The Portuguese have centuries of noble exertions to point backwards to; transcendent achievements as warriors and navigators, altogether out of proportion with the limits of their territory, and the extent of its resources. But small communities have little chance in our times, even if they are centres of vast colonial empires; and Holland itself is going to sleep, though there is nothing lulling in her damp climate, or enervating in her flat and marshy landscape. In what the Portuguese upper classes employ their time it would be difficult to say; but there is certainly no work for them as would befit the descendants of those Lusitanians who went out with Vasco de

Gama and King Sebastian ; and if there were, there are not many that would undertake it.

The Portuguese have accustomed themselves to have their hard work taken off their hands. There are as many as 12,000 *Gallegos*, or emigrants from Galicia, here in Lisbon—more numerous in proportion than at Madrid—taking upon themselves all the labour as porters or sweepers, hackney-coachmen, water-carriers and fellers of wood. The presence of these poor plodding aliens has a demoralising effect upon the population by discrediting humble industry as only befitting the low caste of pariahs whom want drives to their shores from less gifted or more abjectly enslaved regions.

It was helotism that unnerved the Spartan. It is a great misfortune for the Portuguese that he should consider himself too fine a fellow for common handiwork. The same fatal influence that the Negro had in the Southern and the Irish in the Northern States of the American Union, is at work in Spain and Portugal, in consequence of the use and abuse both countries make of the Gallego. That a nation, like an individual, should “earn its bread by the sweat of its brow,” is a law which has been enacted for the benefit, and not for the punishment of human kind. A people which eluded part of it by devolving the hard, or even the dirty work on what slavery or want

reduces to the condition of an inferior race, is guilty of a rebellion against nature, the Nemesis of which is the more or less rapid deterioration of its own physical, as well as moral powers.

It is the Gallego who cuts the sinews of the Portuguese, in the same manner as the German, Swiss, or Slavonian soldier of fortune in olden times broke the nerve of the Florentine or Venetian patrician, who seemed to think fighting the hardest and dirtiest of all works, as, in a certain sense, it certainly is. The nation that gave up its place in the battle-field, soon found attendance in the council, or even at the counting-house, a task above its strength. By ceasing to be a soldier, the mediæval Italian unfitted himself for a sailor's, a merchant's, and finally a free man's employment. And by the same process the Portuguese, by eschewing hard work, was brought to loathe all kind of work.

In the torpid ease that peace engendered, we may see one of the causes of that incorrigible stagnation of all the productive powers of the nation which so painfully strikes a stranger as he enters Lisbon, and which makes him almost regret the comparative bustle of the life he has left behind him in Madrid; much as he is aware that its impulse in the latter city comes from political passion and strife; and

that, to whatever eventual order it may be tending, it is now only productive of chaos and destruction. Whatever the cause, Spain, even amidst the horrors of the Civil War of 1875, suggested the idea of a more hopeful community than peaceful, orderly, but apparently stagnant Portugal.

As a mere capital of Portugal, with its reduced colonies, Lisbon is a lifeless city. It is the overgrown head of a shrunken body. But why need it be for ever so? Why should she not become the commercial and industrial capital of the whole Iberian Peninsula? The necessity of some arrangement which should make Spain and Portugal one country for all useful purposes is still equally apparent both in Lisbon and at Madrid, though it need not, and must not, bode any danger to the political independence of either State. A customs' league would establish a better link of union than could be effected by the conjunction of the two crowns upon one head.

Cast a glance at the map, and you will see that railway lines along the Tagus and Douro would bring the vast plains of Castile almost twice as near to the ocean outlets of Lisbon and Oporto, as the roundabout routes which their trade must now follow to reach Cadiz or Seville in the south, or Santander and Bilbao in the north; to say nothing of the advantage of the

sure harbours and calm seas of Portugal, compared to the shallow waters of the Guadalquivir, or the stormy waves of the Bay of Biscay.

By the loss of the mouths of two of its great rivers, the centre of Spain has had the legs intended for its locomotion cut off from under it. It is the obstruction of the Portuguese frontier that makes deserts of Estremadura, Salamanca, and other Spanish central and western provinces. Nature was not, as she never can be, at fault. The frontier between the two kingdoms was man's work; and what man has done can by man be undone.

When all is said in explanation of Portuguese sloth and inertness, there remains the real and most permanent cause of it to be pointed out, and that must be sought in that unnatural frontier.

Why is Lisbon so inanimate? Why are its people so inert and sluggish? Mainly, it may be answered, because they have nothing to do. Portugal is a labourer sitting idle in the market-square, waiting for his lord—Spain—to come and hire him. Remove the fiscal frontier, create an Iberian Zollverein, and Portugal must needs become the fetcher and carrier of two-thirds of the Spanish produce, whether the trade be carried on by the Portuguese themselves, or whether Gallegos, English, Germans, or other aliens come and take it in hand.

CHAPTER IV.

OPORTO.

Lisbon to Oporto—Mishap on the journey—The city of port-wine—The town—The suburb—The river—The river-mouth—The English Colony—A journey to the port-wine country—A Portuguese inn—A Portuguese bullock-cart—Creaking wheels—Trotting oxen—The upper Douro valley—Regoa—Port-wine—Wine-growers—Wine shippers—Wine merchants—Who are the guilty parties?—Pure wine and doctored wine—Glorious port-wine!

“PARMA? Let me see,” exclaimed a worthy John Bull, to whom an Italian was introduced as a native of that city; “let me see. What do we know about Parma? Ha! to be sure!—Parmesan cheese.”

By an analogous association of ideas Portugal is in many men’s minds identified with port-wine; and, indeed, for most people dwelling between Minho and Guadiana, port-wine is a great institution. At Oporto, port is king; and, as in former days I had seen enough of the Lusitanian capital, I thought I could do no better than take the train to the metropolis of port-wine.

We had a disastrous journey. There had been heavy rains all over Europe that winter (1879), and there was a heavy downpour as we set out by the evening train, which was to reach Oporto early in the morning. The rain came down in torrents as we passed Coimbra after midnight, and by the time we reached Aveiro, the fifth station before Oporto, at daybreak, we came to a dead standstill, and learnt with dismay that the lowlands along-shore were all flooded, a bridge in front of us had been swept off, and the traffic was equally interrupted in our rear.

Never was there such a deluge; never was the weather so cold in these latitudes, where the end of February is in ordinary years scarcely considered winter. We shivered at the ill-sheltered and fireless station, as we compared notes with the fugitives from the flooded districts around, and speculated on the prospects of our release from what seemed from the beginning a most awkward predicament.

We had to stay at Aveiro two days and two nights. We waded to the town at a mile's distance, and arrived wet through and through, only to find its wretched inns crowded to the garrets, indifferent fare, and no sleeping accommodation whatever. Back we went to the station, where we had to fight battles royal with the stolid station-master, who would not allow us to make bedrooms of our railway carriages;

who could not tell us when the line would be re-opened for traffic backward or forward ; who refused to supply us with post-chaises at the Company's expense, and objected to our departure even by such conveyances as we procured at our own charge ; who, in short, seemed to look upon us as his prisoners, and in the end peremptorily refused to unlock the luggage-van, and part with our bags and boxes, which, he contended, could only be delivered at the station for which they were booked.

And thus, at last, starved with hunger and cold, and aching in every limb with acute rheumatic pains, which racked us for several days, and only with the clothes we had on, we drove by a roundabout road to Oporto, where we arrived, unshaven, travel-stained, and in such a plight as could scarcely obtain us admission into a decent hotel.

After a fortnight of this perverse weather, we were finally allowed to renew our acquaintance with the sun and stars, and it became possible to go about, and take a survey of the place where the storm had landed us.

Oporto boasts one of the most picturesque, consequently of the quaintest, most puzzling, and least comfortable positions in the world. It stands on the right or north bank of the river Douro, on a range of hills 400 feet to 500 feet high, some of its stately

edifices sparsely crowning the summits, and its narrow streets mostly sliding precipitously between bold granite cliffs to the water's edge.

Over against the city, across the water, on the brow of the hills are the scattered houses and gardens of Villanova de Gaya, at the foot of which the "lodges," or cellars, and offices of the port-wine merchants—a maze of low-roofed red-tiled sheds, intersected by narrow alleys—slope down to the river. Between the town and its suburbs communication across the stream is established by a handsome suspension bridge for foot passengers and carriages; and, about half-a-mile up, the river is spanned by the railway viaduct hanging high up in the air, arch upon arch, a marvel of modern engineering.

The city along the river, placed where the Douro is at the narrowest, stretches to the length of about two miles; and, three miles below is the Foz (Italian *foce*) or mouth of the river, and the maritime suburb of San Joao da Foz, which the natives call "The Brighton of Oporto."

The town has trees and gardens and many fountains in its open spaces, and the people live, as a rule, not in flats, but in modest separate houses; there are no huge blocks of buildings five or six stories high to obstruct the sky and take away a man's breath; and from many a balcony or terrace

lovely glimpses are caught of green, pine-crowned hilly ridges, and long reaches of the broad eddying stream. Of Oporto, in short, we might say, as it was sung of Heidelberg, that it is a "*schöne Stadt, wann es ausgereget hat.*"

It is a place, too, where a Briton feels at home, with its broad "Rua dos Ingлезes," and his magnificent "Factory," or club-house, with library and assembly rooms for carnival balls, and a crystal palace, with extensive grounds, and a decent Anglican church, with a snug little paradise of a Protestant cemetery.

Still the most interesting spot connected with Oporto is the Bar at the mouth of the river—the almost impracticable harbour, which makes the appellation of the city, "The Port," a misnomer.

You go down to it by a broad highway along the stream, flanked on the right by rugged cliffs, the road planted here and there with rows of trees, the footpaths crossed at intervals by the cables of the moored shipping; the scene on the opposite bank, in the rear, and all around you, pleasantly varying at every step, all enlivened by the bells of the mule-drawn "American," or tramway-cars, and come thus to the Foz, and the town of its patron saint, San Joao.

You go round the castle to the beech, climbing up to the sea-wall, and stand at last on a platform,

whence you contemplate a scene of sublime tumult and strife. You look down where the turbid river, laden with a fortnight's deluge, is battling against the mountain-high ocean waves, the foam and spray rising high above the rocks and shoals which line this treacherous coast; the thunder of the churning waters contrasting with the unutterable stillness of the air and the loveliness of the early morning; for the last breath of the gale is spent, and all that rage of the billows is merely the after-swell of the storm, which is slowly and sullenly subsiding. On the water out at sea, or on the river, there is not a sail in sight; for this last score of days no vessel has ventured in or out; the trade of Oporto is at a standstill; and men are earnestly thinking by what contrivance the harbour may be so reconstructed that the traffic do not cease altogether.

Little as there may be in Oporto to induce a traveller to prolong his stay, he ought not, however, to leave the place without bestowing a visit on that district of the Alto Douro which bears the name of the Port-wine Country.

I undertook the journey under the escort of two excellent friends, both English, either by birth or extraction, but both nobles in Portugal, and both wine-shippers, whose industry and beneficent influence

in the country the King had acknowledged by the bestowal of the most conspicuous titles in his gift.

We travelled by rail from Oporto 46 miles to Cahide, where we found at the station a country spring-cart, drawn by three smart and active mountain nags, which in about two hours brought us to Amarante, at the foot of the hill country.

We had a midnight supper there, with tawny portwine of the year '12, and slept for about three hours, as the fashion seemed to be in Portuguese inns, some lying all dressed on a shakedown on the floor, others seated on chairs with elbows resting on the suppertable.

Between 2 and 3 a.m. our cartman thundered at the floor from undernéath, with a battering-ram which shook us where we sat. We lost no time in obeying the summons, and as we assembled downstairs, lighting our cigars, we had leisure to examine the peculiarities of a Portuguese hostelry, to which we had paid little attention in the evening.

The ground-floor consisted of one large apartment, half entrance-hall, half kitchen; the inner half canopied all over, windows and all, by a vast chimney, round which were ranged rows of benches, tables, and all the cooking paraphernalia, and this was by day the "house place," the kitchen, bar and parlour for the peasant

customers. By night it became the landlord's family dormitory, and was then shut in by strong wooden railings that gave it the appearance of a wild-beast cage.

None of the people within were astir. In the hall was a stout peasant woman, like ourselves busy with her preparations for a journey, who, while tying up her bundles by the light of a single candle, had rid herself of the burden of her child, a voluminously-swathed infant, by popping it on its seat on a table, where it sat bobbing its head and leering like a toy Chinese mandarin, but now and then alarming everybody present, except its bustling mother, by sudden jerks which threatened to bring it to the ground, in its moth-like attempts to reach the flame of the candle.

Outside was our conveyance, a country cart, to which, instead of horses, two yokes of oxen were put—stout, short-legged creatures with meek, loving eyes, and long sharp horns, their heads wrapped in some kind of stuffed leather mitres, which came down to their very eyelids, as cumbrous a headgear as a Grenadier bearskin cap.

The cart was little better than a common spring cart, and only different from the peasants' vans that it had not those dismal creaking wheels, which shriek as they revolve as if they were crushing ten thousand

swine—a dismal music that may be heard at miles' distance, and which, when a long string of carts travel the same way, becomes too atrocious for human ears. This barbarous practice arose, perhaps, in times in which the insecurity of the roads rendered it advisable for travellers to keep within hearing, at least, if not within sight, of each other, the sound of approaching wheels puzzling and alarming the bandits, who saw themselves liable to constant interruption in the exercise of their calling. At any rate it is evident that it is from choice and not from scarcity of grease that the boors of this region put up with this horrid noise, for they have no difficulty in stopping it upon entering the towns, where the police would not tolerate it. The cattle themselves, we are told, are so cheered in their way by this excruciating sound, that they stop when it stops, and stubbornly refuse to go on without it.

There is another peculiarity of the bullocks of these mountain districts, that not only on the ascents their walk is brisk and well sustained, but they trot down hill almost as gallantly as thoroughly trained post-horses would do. I am not sure that the oxen of other countries could not do as much if they were put to it, for neither men nor animals know exactly what they can do till they try—or are tried; but I have never seen anything like it elsewhere.

We toiled up for two mortal hours' ascent from

Amarante to Quintella, in the dark, over what may have been a good road, and at daybreak we alighted on the top to stretch our cramped limbs, and to get a zest for our breakfast, which we snatched, as the French say "on the thumb," in the carriage as the sun rose.

Quintella was reached at 8 a.m., after which, unharnessing the oxen to put the horses to, we drove down the steep road into the Douro Valley, passed Mesao Frio, and hence along the river bank came, two hours later—half-past ten—to Regoa, the capital of the port-wine country.

The Douro valley, into which we had entered through a pass over the Marao Chain, is shut in on both sides by two lofty mountain barriers, with the hill slopes all scored by the vineyard terraces from end to end. The valley is grand but monotonous at all seasons, and at the time we saw it, it was bleak and bare, brown and arid, steep and stony, and its temperature struck us as chill and raw, in spite of the green leaves of the elder-bushes, and the buds and blossoms which peach and pear-trees rather rashly attempted to exhibit.

The valley is densely populated, and labourers' cottages, all whitewashed, dot the landscape to the highest summit. Shut in on all sides by these lofty natural walls, the winding valley sees almost absolutely

no sun in the winter, when the climate is, considering the latitude, extremely cold, with snow lying heavily on the ground, and frost often lasting 24 hours. In the summer, on the contrary, when the sun is high, it is caught in the close valley as in a trap, and the heat is intense; and it is owing to this circumstance, that the district is subject to both extremes of temperature, as well as to the peculiar nature of the soil, that the wine which grows here is "the best in the world," the winter cold opportunely checking the growth of the vine, and giving it the rest required by plants of temperate climates.

Regoa lies on the slope of a low hill on the right bank of the river, and is the residence of the well-to-do wine growers, who have here good comfortable houses for the winter, and only visit their *fincas* or *quintas* when the business of vine dressing or vintage compels their attendance, real rural life having apparently no charm in Portugal or in other southern countries, for people who are not, like the poorest labourers, tied to the soil.

We drove and rode about, however, along the valley, visited the better sort of rural establishments belonging to my titled travelling companions, who treated us to the contents of cob-webbed bottles of nectar of their father's growing; and examined the vineyards already withering under the scourge of the

Phylloxera vastatrix, and we tested the efficiency of the various remedies which had just been imported from France with a view, if possible, to check its spreading ravages. Both at Regoa and at Oporto I saw enough of port-wine to come to the conclusion that to know what that wine really is, one should come and make its acquaintance in its native land.

All wine, to become an article of trade, must be a work of art as well as a production of nature; but there are artists who carry their consummate skill so far that they can *make* wine—any kind of wine—not only with any kind of grape, but even “without grape;” and of all wines, especially of those sold in some of the London shops, no wine is more cleverly, or more outrageously, adulterated than port-wine—the “king of wines.”

A traveller here is feasted by his friends with wine at every stage of its development—a liquor the exquisite taste and flavour of which are nowhere to be matched. But that wine which is very dark-red, and almost black as ink in its early stages, changes to light ruby colour and amber transparency as it advances to its maturity; and this old, generous wine, perfectly genuine and natural (with the exception of the unavoidable but slight admixture of spirit) is shipped off to England; and it is the fault of nobody here in Portugal if such wine, when brought to

England, is done no justice to ; if it finds no purchaser ; and is not even allowed or acknowledged to be port-wine ; something very different being usually sold under that name. It reaches England, and comes into the market, and should have no other mark or label than *Caveat emptor*. It is for the customer to choose, to educate his taste, to learn what he should drink and avoid. For what may be done in England the Oporto wine shipper must not be held responsible.

Whether wine may be kept indefinitely for many years and centuries, and whether it may travel any distance by land or sea without a few drops of strengthening brandy, are moot points which I have been unable to settle to my own satisfaction, by consulting the most honourable growers and traders in Portugal, in Spain, and other countries. I have been given wine that the giver assured me had been pressed by his grandfather ; but whether that liquor, mellow as it was, was "as pure as the first cup that Noah quaffed," as I was told, or whether it had been in the least "doctored," the grandson could indeed tell, but not know—for he was not there to see it done.

It would be surely irrational to quarrel with any harmless and wholesome contrivance which might be deemed absolutely necessary to ensure the safe keeping and travelling of good wines. Nature seemed to have

intended to deprive man in cold and damp climates of the blessings of the juice of the grape, and it was providential that art should step in to enable man to do away with that privation, simply by the appliance of that same juice spiritualised by distillation. But it is supposed and asserted that something besides is done, especially in the case of port-wine, for the purpose of giving it colour, flavour, and sweetness, which, whether objectionable or not, must be stigmatised as wanton adulteration.

It is stated that wine growers here act in this matter against their inclination and even against their interest, for they would not willingly resort to unworthy tricks, to go through manipulations, and to throw in ingredients, which would involve considerable trouble and expense, if they could possibly help it. It is urged that the public taste is made and must be humoured; that all merchandise must be suited to the market. But my friends of the Douro district reject the charge for themselves, however applicable they may think it to the producers of other wines. They insist that there would be nothing gained but much lost by tampering with nature. That even the admixture of more spirit than is absolutely needed, would entail a heavy cost upon them; for no spirit can be procured cheaper than wine as it is obtained by them at the fountain-head.

I think I owed to my Oporto friends this short abridgment of the arguments by which they pleaded their own cause. It is true that, either by right or wrong, a bad name had, years ago, been given in England to port-wine; that it was stigmatised as a heavy, heady, stupefying beverage, and that it was, as such, banished from many of the tables of those upper classes among whom the traditions of the three-bottle men of Pitt and Addington times are now looked upon as mere myths.

Time and common-sense, however, are reasserting their wonted ascendancy. People begin to perceive that port should not be blamed for the sins of port drinkers; that its vigorous, generous nature ought to be the best recommendation in a climate like that of England, where stimulants are, in some measure, needed to counteract the depressing influences of the heavy atmosphere, and that those who, while pleading guilty to a hankering for port, profess to object to it, because "one cannot drink much of it," might well reconcile their taste with their discretion by drinking a *little less* of it.

"Wine, as a restorative," says Liebig, "as a means of refreshment, where the powers of life are exhausted—as giving animation and energy where man has to struggle with days of depression—as a means of correction and compensation where misproportion occurs

in nutrition, and the organism is deranged in its operations, and as a means of protection against transient organic disturbances—*wine* is surpassed by no production of nature or art. Wine is the universal medicine for the healthy as well as the sick, and is looked upon as milk for the aged."

And if such are wine's virtues, surely they will all be found combined in port-wine, the wine of wines, provided one can get the genuine article, and use it with that moderation which ought to distinguish a human being from a brute.

CHAPTER V.

LISBON TO MALAGA.

Lisbon to Badajoz—Portuguese and Spanish railways—Railway officials, French and Spanish—Travelling experiences—Fellow-passengers—An unlucky pair of boots—Badajoz to Cordova—Crossing the Sierra—The Andalusian plain—Andalusian beauty—Cordova to Malaga—A mountain-gorge—Distress at Malaga—Malaga.

FROM Lisbon to Malaga, *viâ* Badajoz, Almorchon, and Cordova, the distance is 799 kilomètres. The fare for a first-class ticket is 16,100 reis, or, in English money, with a moderate amount of luggage, £4. The time employed (from Saturday evening, forty minutes past eight, to Monday evening, half-past nine) a little above 48 hours. The rate of speed is, therefore, 15 kilomètres, or about $10\frac{1}{2}$ English miles an hour. It is considerably below the average speed of other *tren correos*, or mail-trains south of the Pyrenees, which is from 20 to 25 kilomètres hourly.

This is certainly but little improvement, as to time, on the good old coaching times. But the gain in

comfort is even less ; and the traveller who buys his ticket, and expects to get what he has paid for, must prepare for an incessant trial of his temper.

In Spain and Portugal the same rule applies to railways as to all other matters. Order is tyranny ; freedom is anarchy. There is as much law as a man can take into his own hands, or obtain for a consideration. Your ticket entitles you to a place ; but you are not prepared to be stowed away in a first-class carriage with a mountain of luggage ; and yet that is what you will have to put up with, unless, like the two French *commis voyageurs* in our central compartment, you stick a paper on the window-pane with the word "*Reservado*," thus dooming all your fellow-passengers to pack themselves as they can, with all their belongings, into the two other carriages, which is all that the railway company allows for first-class passengers.

Into one of these unreserved compartments we had to fight our way as we could, for Spanish guards and other officials, if any be in attendance, are bound to a policy of strict neutrality, and allow the passengers to settle their disputes at their pleasure.

An odd and curious set of men are these Spanish railway servants. The Spanish railways are, for the most part, foreign, chiefly French property. As such, they are under French management, and French

officials are here generally as pedantic and consequential as it is in their nature to be, at home or abroad. But some of the guards, porters, etc., are natives of the country; and their readiness to oblige the traveller is unbounded, and springs as much from innate courtesy and amiability as from instinctive hatred of their foreign employers.

An instance of their disposition of mind in that respect occurred to me as I once travelled from Paris to Madrid. I went to the booking-office at Irun, and applied for a *coupé lit*, but was told that none could be had, as they must be pre-engaged from Paris. The guard, however, who had heard what I wanted, gave me a friendly wink, which bade me wait and hope. And when we stopped at Vittoria for supper, he nudged me as we went back to the train, and put me into one of the sleeping-compartments, which were all vacant. Of course for this delicate attention he received the moderate gratuity of a *cent-sous* piece. But as, for the same accommodation, I should have had to pay the amount of a double first-class ticket, I had no reason to complain. It was a loss to the company, but a little gain to the company's servant.

On another occasion I was journeying with a lady and her maid from Cordova to Seville. On applying to the booking-office, I was told that there happened to be no first-class tickets, but that I could travel

first-class with second-class tickets on paying the difference. I immediately produced an *isabelino*, a gold piece of 25 *pecetas*, or francs; but was told that payment should be made to the guard. As we were taking our places, I tendered my *louis d'or* to the guard, explaining what had occurred; but as the coin exceeded in value the amount due, he told me he had no change, and we must put off the settling of accounts to the next station. At the next station, and the next, there was the same offer on my part, the same difficulty on the other side. No change to be had all the way to Seville. At Seville, the station-master, a Frenchman, came for our tickets, and complained somewhat roughly of the irregularity of which he supposed we were guilty. I tried to pacify him, and in the meanwhile, held out my long rejected gold piece. But the guard stepped in with brazen intrepidity, pushed back my hand and my money, and turning to the Frenchman, cried out: "Don't you interfere! These are *mis amigos*, *mis primos*, (my friends, my cousins), and it is all right as it is.' And, as he spoke, he handed out the lady with great politeness, showed us the way out, called a coach, and shut us in, putting back my hand which still held the gold coin, and saying, "Nada! Nada!" (there is nothing to pay) "Vayan Vdes con Dios."

But I had no such luck this time as I left Lisbon.

Packed close in a first-class carriage like pickled herrings, eight in one carriage, we set out on that Saturday evening and reached the *entroncamento*, or junction of the Lisbon-Oporto with the Lisbon-Madrid line about midnight, and crossed the frontier between Elvas and Badajoz at daybreak.

Travelling by night is a necessity in Spain; and it is in hot weather a luxury. But we were still in spring; my fellow-travellers dreaded the night air; they pulled up the windows, lighted their cigarettes, and, by their spitting, made of the carriage a pigsty. There is a fond notion among Spaniards that "one man is as good as another," and no one in that country will travel second-class who can afford to pay for the first. A very proper and reasonable pride, doubtless; but which is apt to bring one into contact with strange fellow-passengers.

I had as my *vis-à-vis* in the corner seat, a sprightly Frenchwoman, to all appearance recently wedded to a Madrid shopkeeper, to whom she was the object of unremitting honeymoon attentions. By my side sat a boor of La Mancha, a cattle-dealer, judging from the dress, stalwart and uncouth, who, having no one to entertain him, made his preparations for a nap, putting on his cotton night-cap, and taking off his thick-soled, hob-nailed boots; and soon by his hard breathing giving evidence of his sound sleep.

The boots which he had carelessly thrown under the seat slipped forward at every jerk of the train, and crept up to the dainty *bottines* of the Frenchwoman, who shrunk from the contact, and turned with a silent appeal to her mate. This latter administered a smart kick to the offending *chaussures*, and sent them rolling to the opposite end of the carriage. The unfortunate boots were then spurned to the right and left, the passengers keeping up a lively game of football with them till they tired of the sport, and most of them—myself with the rest—dropped asleep. The Frenchwoman alone kept awake.

On arriving at the frontier we were roused with loud clamour by the Spanish custom-house guards, and summoned to the waiting-room for the inspection of our hand luggage. The burly Manchegan was for a few minutes groping and rummaging under the seat and all over the floor of the carriage, calling out "*Mis botas! Mis botas!*" with a string of "*Voto á Dios!*" and other ejaculations which it would be needless to translate. But the guards became impatient, and down he had to come, hobbling and limping after us, with only one boot on—the only one he could find—following us across the platform and back again to the carriages, where he resumed his seat with a puzzled look, scanning the faces of his fellow-travellers, and these latter returning his

stare with demure countenances, not one word of explanation about the missing boot being spoken, and when we reached Badajoz, we left the discomfited cattle-dealer to repair his loss at the next shoe-maker's.

From the frontier at Badajoz eight dreary hours' travelling brought us to Almorchon, where we left the main line, and struck across the Sierra Morena, up to Belmez and down to Cordova, arriving half-starved at this latter place at 10.30 a.m., only one hour after our time.

It is especially as one crosses this dreary God-forsaken land of Estremadura that the distressing slowness of Spanish railway travelling most painfully affects a stranger. It would seem as if Spain's especial delight consisted in exhibiting the nakedness of her land to foreign visitors by making them linger on every spot in that howling wilderness, creeping along that vast, uninhabited, uncultivated, plain, winding round the skirts of those barren mountains, tarrying, without any apparent object, at all those dingy stations, wasting the livelong day in the contemplation of large districts which were amongst the wealthiest and happiest of human abodes, till struck with perpetual sterility by centuries of stolid neglect, misrule, and improvidence.

As we crossed the Sierra and advanced into the

mining districts of Belmez the aspect of things improved. The holiday folk at the stations, all out in their Sunday best, began to exhibit some of the noisy riotousness and devil-may-care volubility of the Andalusian, a pleasing contrast to the sombre Castilian taciturnity we had left behind. Pretty women's faces, almost an unknown luxury in Portugal, showed themselves amid the peasant crowd, and the scene was unusually enlivened by bands of be-ribboned *quintos*, or conscripts, victims of the Moloch of our warlike times, whose sacrifice was soothed by patriotic blandishments and friendly conviviality, the festive din of the parting hour drowning the unwelcome thought of the irksome duties and stern discipline that awaited them in barracks.

Perhaps there was something at that moment to reconcile these poor youths to their fate. These were hard times for the mining districts of Belmez and Linares. The glut of lead in English and other markets, in consequence of competition from America, had caused a stagnation in the work, and thrown, as I was told, more than 18,000 hands suddenly out of employment. In such a stress, even the conscription might seem a godsend to these discharged miners, as the alternative would be emigration to Oran on the French African coast, or to the more distant settlements of the Andes and the Plate. From the port

of Malaga alone 25,000 men had left for America in the previous year, 1878.

The railway across the mining districts, from Almorchon to Belmez and Cordova, has been constructed with little engineering skill, and the least possible expense. The Sierra is crossed without a single tunnel, but the gradients are extremely severe, and require the use of the most powerful locomotive engines. The progress is slow and tedious beyond endurance, and the company has to spend in working the line the money which was unwisely stinted in its construction. Another consequence of the penny-wise, cheap-and-nasty system on which these railways were originally made, is their unfitness for great speed, and the frequency of the accidents the trains meet with even at their ordinary snail's pace, owing to the many sudden turnings, and the rickety foundation of the viaducts and bridges, as well as to the want of proper attention to the rolling stock, which is seldom removed from the line till it actually breaks down on the rails.

To these heavy charges against Peninsular railways and their management, the Andalusian line from Madrid to Seville and Cadiz is an honourable exception. It is the only line where the express train attains a speed of 25 miles an hour. The Portuguese line, from Madrid to Lisbon, is among the worst.

Besides the inconvenience of the unavoidable night travelling, and the long fasting to which in Spain one is condemned by the unfrequency of refreshment-rooms, good or bad, one stands a good chance not only of being killed, and more often of being severely bruised in some untoward encounter, but also of being deprived of the consolation, such as it is, of the sympathy of kind-hearted people, owing to the care the company take to hush up all reports of such mishaps, and to the readiness with which the press consents to suppress any allusion to unpleasant subjects.

We stayed at Cordova the night and part of the Monday. The train for Malaga was to leave at two in the afternoon, but we had to wait two hours for the train from Madrid, which had been detained at Val de Peñas by one of those never-mentioned accidents—the upsetting of a luggage-train, and the consequent obstruction of the line—an accident the report of which was received by our fellow-passengers with an equanimity which speaks volumes as to the little account in which men in fatalistic Spain hold their own safety, as well as other people's life, limbs, and time.

The plain of Cordova, as we crossed the Guadalquivir, and advanced towards Montilla and Aguilar, is one of the richest in the Peninsula, and it showed to the best advantage at this moment, with its luxuriant

green crops, its deep soil saturated by a rainy season, following upon a ten years' drought which had brought Spain to the very verge of starvation.

The care bestowed on the olive-plantations, the neatness with which the vines were trimmed and pruned, and the straight lines of the furrows traced through the dark mould of the freshly-ploughed fields, bespoke a husbandry, somewhat backward and primitive, maybe, but, at all events, diligent and business-like.

We were at the end of April, and the verdure of the landscape was more than usually fresh and vivid. The plain was enamelled with wild flowers in the most lavish profusion, and, under shelter of the hills, the roses, the lilacs, and other garden shrubs, were all out in such full-blown richness as they would hardly attain in England before the middle of June.

And with the renovation of the pomp and pride of the vegetable kingdom the very look of the population seemed equally affected, and, as it were, sympathetically recreated. The famed beauties of Andalusia never show at greater advantage than at this season, when the respite of the short winter months, and the repose of domestic retirement, have freshened their complexion, and filled out their rounded forms, restoring a health and strength which, in the heat and dissipation of the summer season, are apt

to pine and droop. It is in early spring that the *pollas* and *majas* come out from long seclusion, like snakes from hibernation, emerge in all their glory, sweeping the ground with their bright new finery, witching the world with their graceful undulating movements, their dark eyes glancing through the fringe of their mantillas, with a dreamy and vacant yet irresistibly winning expression.

At the Bobadilla station, where we left the Granada line on our left, we entered the deep defile through which the railway has been made to cross the Sierra Nevada. The spot has been described to me as the most sublime gorge south of the Pyrenees, the traveller being made to wonder whether what most forcibly challenges his admiration is the stupendous mass of rocks by which nature barred the pass, or the engineering skill which contrived to thread its way through it.

It had been matter of regret to my friends at Cordova that, owing to the delay in the train, I should have to go through such grand scenery in the dark; but all turned out for the best, as the evening was of the brightest, and the amber twilight with which the rays of the tiniest crescent moon, and of Venus as evening star, were blending, gave the subdued tints of the awful landscape a glamour which would

perhaps have been flouted by too garish a blaze of the noontide sun.

The train toiled up, panting and trembling, on the abrupt ascent, the powerful engine uttering shriek after shriek of agony as it plunged into a tunnel, and from the first into a second and a third, working its way into the depth of the earth, and emerging upon bridges, perched high upon ravines, and hanging like threads on the Alpine torrents beneath ; leaping, as it were, over chasms yawning between perpendicular mountain walls.

The dark outlines of those rugged peaks, the sharp edges of those boldly-projecting cliffs, the glistening of those foaming waters, of which only glimpses were caught in the waning light, made up such a rapid succession of dissolving views as no contrivance of art could hope to rival. The sensation was of real terror, pleasurably relieved by the consciousness of perfect security ; and the climax was reached as we gained the summit of the pass, and the train rushed down with a speed increasing at every step in its headlong career. On through gloomy caverns and over high platforms we wound and swept, as through a world of shadows, and night only closed upon us as we at last came out upon easy slopes, and glided peacefully down into the plain.

That journey was like a dream disturbed by portentous nightmares, and I never doubted since then that railway travelling may have a poetry of its own.

The signs of deep distress and helpless despondency struck us at a first glance as we rose in the morning and looked about us in the Malaga streets. Trade was there at the lowest ebb, and the port was nearly forsaken, a phenomenon by no means extraordinary, as, in the best of times, this was the slack season, and business is only brisk in the latter months of the year, when autumn ripens the fruit which constitutes the wealth of southern Spain. But Malaga, and all this southern coast, Almeria, Cartagena, Alicante, and Valencia, may be looked upon as a part of Africa with respect to climate, and they suffered still terribly from that drought from which Cordova and the rest of the inland region were just beginning to recover. Malaga had to buy part of her bread, and prices had been rising for the last ten years, while labour and labour's wages had been steadily declining. The staple commodities of Malaga are grapes and raisins—which are what figs are to Smyrna, or currants to Patras—and oil and wine, besides what the place makes out of the exportation of part of the lead and other produce of the mining districts; but all these resources had been affected by the general depression of trade and

industry of which Spain at the time complained with the rest of Europe.

Altogether it was under unfavourable auspices that I saw Malaga, and it would have been wrong on my part to judge of the capabilities of the place from what then fell under my observation. Malaga lies on the threshold of the tropics, and there is hardly a tropical fruit, hardly a precious fine-grained wood that could not be easily acclimatised on the hill slopes as easily as the aloe, the cactus, and other prickly plants which supply the edges of every field. A few custard-apples, bananas, and pineapples are cultivated, and plantations of sugar-canes are thriving in the neighbourhood.

For the rest, Malaga has not much to recommend it to a foreign visitor: indeed, nothing besides its Alameda, the bull-ring built at a very high cost, and its position under shelter of its range of hills and of its old Moorish citadel of Gibralfaro perched on a rock commanding a vast extent of the city and of its far-stretching plain. It is a place where, I have no doubt, many people find it pleasant to live, and where any reasonable man ought to be easily resigned to die if at least he could hope to rest in the pretty burial-ground that the English and other Protestants have laid out with infinite love and pains for their dead.

CHAPTER VI.

RONDA.

A longing to see the place—Old and new ways to it—The journey—Malaga to Ronda—Aspect of the country—Old and new Spanish inns—A dining-room with four-footed attendants—Unique features of Ronda—The chasm—The bridge—The waterfall—View from the Alameda—Future prospects of the town.

EVERY year a man lives, every object he accomplishes, every wish he gratifies, may be said to drive a nail into his coffin. There is much in this wide world that is worth seeing; but it may be that one has travelled long enough to have visited every spot he particularly wished to see; that he has come to the full length of the tether he was appointed to run, and that he feels life like the *Peau de Chagrin* in the French novel, dwindling and shrinking with the enjoyment of every new pleasure, with the fulfilment of every long-cherished desire.

It was with melancholy thoughts of this nature that I came to Ronda, in the heart of the Sierra. I can hardly say how many years I had longed to

see the place. I was very near it in the year 1836, when I tarried for three months at Gibraltar. I passed it by several times subsequently, at different stages in my career, as I rambled from Cordova to Granada, to Seville and Cadiz. But, somehow, I lacked the time or money, or fellow-travellers. For people gave the place a bad name, and English officers from the Rock seldom came up here except in a caravan, an indirect warning to those who could not muster in number sufficient for self-defence.

But things had changed since those times. In 1879, it had become possible for a man to travel to Ronda on wheels. A French engineer was laying his plans to bring up passengers by rail. The highway-men of the Serrania had turned traders. They were the wayfarer's friends and only robbed the Government, the unsparing enemy whose hand was against every man. There are no better men to deal with than the Rondeños, if you can bring yourself to sympathise with their smuggling; for defrauding the revenue is what they call commerce; the wealthiest in the land glories in his achievements in that line of business, and only retires from contraband to become a receiver of contraband goods.

I left Malaga on a Sunday morning, in March, 1879, by the 7.15 mail-train. I travelled for nearly two hours across the portentous mountain gorge as far

as the station, which is given as Gabantes or Gobantes in the Railway Guide, and Bogantes on the railway ticket. Here the *diligence* awaited us, a lumbering vehicle with a *berlina* or *coupé*, a *rotonde* and an *imperial* in the dear old style, drawn by eight gray mules, with a postilion in charge of the leaders, and the rest of the team under the tender cares of a coachman with a heavy, long whip, and a sort of lackey seated on the box by his side armed with a stout cudgel, with which it was his business to alight whenever the road was particularly heavy, and who ran along the toiling cattle, flourishing his weapon right and left, when more than ordinary persuasion was required to urge them on.

We travelled at a spanking pace, for the mules were good, and the Spaniards have the knack of making the best of the very worst; and the road was in good order, and it only happened once that we had to alight, the deep ruts made by the heavy rains for about half-a-mile making it very desirable that the coach should be lightened to give it a chance to pull through. We set out at about ten, and changed mules four times, and it was between five and six in the afternoon when we reached our destination.

The country was mountainous, but not interesting. We had broad, sweeping slopes to the right and left, with the green crops growing in patches on most of

them, not very rich or luxuriant; and we coasted rough, rocky mountains bare to the summits, which rose gray and bleak like great islands on a green ocean, but the gigantic heights of which were dwarfed by the altitude of the undulating table-land which we traversed. There was not a tree in sight from end to end of the journey, if we except the stunted olives in the immediate neighbourhood of Campillos, Teba, and the few other villages, and hardly any isolated habitation, except the houses or big huts of the *Peones Cantoneros*, uninviting as seen through the open doors, but outside dazzling with the brightest whitewash.

There was a new hotel in Ronda, the *Hotel Rondaño*, quite a palace, some of the apartments of which were used by the town as a club or casino. But it had only been opened two or three years before, and both Murray and O'Shea, knowing no better, recommended the *Posada de las Animas*; and, trusting to the "Red Books," to las Animas I went. And a proper place for souls in purgatory I found it—a primitive place, with the kitchen, parlour, and offices all in one room on the ground-floor, paved throughout with the same hard, sharp-pointed flints as the street outside, with the wind blowing in from the wide-open front-door, and rushing through to the equally wide-open door of the adjoining stable-yard, with no shelter anywhere save under the huge chimney,

where three or four boors sat crouching over the blaze from a brushwood fire, and a few others at a little round table at supper. These latter were waited upon by a young donkey, who, as I soon learnt, had lost its mother and was here at nurse, and had the run of the house, and poked the customers' knees and elbows for a crust like a pet dog.

I was received by a stout old woman with a full-grown moustache; was shown upstairs by a stoutish young woman, the old one's daughter, with a growing moustache, and found myself in possession of a small parlour and smaller alcove, with whitewashed walls and ceiling and a brick floor without mat or rug, a rickety table, and a few chairs with from five to seven legs the pair.

A fine specimen of an old Spanish hostelry I had got into; a *posada* has been on the spot since 1687, for so, at least, I learnt from an inscription of that date under an old painting on the door, where the Virgin Mother was seen rescuing little red things like salamanders as they stretched up their bare arms to her from the flames; a muleteer *posada* of Cervantes's own times, originally a poky Morisco house, which has set its heart against all modern improvements; had neither glass nor even oiled paper at the windows, but only bare, crazy, rotten wooden shutters on the upper stories; it altogether dispensed with windows on

the ground-floor, and equally managed to do without larder and cellar, having "everything *usted* may desire in the way of eating or drinking"—that is, everything it could send for on the spur of the moment from the market-place or from the nearest bread and wine shops.

Ronda would be, and, I dare say, was well worth putting up with all that when it afforded no better; but, after the experience of a night and half a day, finding that I was being starved with cold and hunger, and that besides the ass's presence, I was beset by a sow with a litter of ten, I felt the necessity of drawing a line somewhere; and, protesting against the piglings, I called for my bill, and that being settled, bade a long farewell to the female moustaches, and betook myself to the hotel.

Ronda enjoys an unrivalled, unique situation. It would be impossible to describe what it is, and not easy to tell what it is like. Men who have travelled in Italy and seen Orvieto, Tivoli, and Terni, may conjure up this place in their imagination by casting two of those Italian towns, or all three, into one. Ronda is built on a high limestone rock like Orvieto, but the rock is split in twain by a great crack or chasm, through which runs a mountain stream, the Guadalvin, or Guadiaro, coming in at one end and going out at the other in a cataract like the Neva at Terni, or the Teverone at Tivoli.

The town stands on either side of the chasm ; and just where it widens out into the open, right over the waterfall, a splendid bridge has been thrown athwart, by the side of which rise the Town Hall, the rambling buildings of the market-place, and other edifices, all hanging on sheer perpendicular cliffs.

The bridge consists of one arch, 110 feet in diameter, standing on two pillars 17 feet in thickness, and it rises 252 feet above the torrent just where it takes its first leap, and about 600 feet above the abyss of rocks into which it finally plunges. These measurements I take from the guide-books. The bridge dates from 1761, and was designed by Don José Maria Aldeguela, a native architect, who, as if conscious that his work in life was over and he could never surpass it, fell from its height as the last stone was laid, meeting the same tragic fate as awaited, more than a century later, the engineer to whom Milan is indebted for her splendid Victor Emmanuel Gallery.

On either side of the bridge the parapets are pierced by broad windows, accessible from high stone steps, and protected by strong iron bars, through which one looks down into the deep gorge above and below. As you look upwards you see a row of huge bulging limestone masses, closely ranged side by side, with deep clefts intervening, mantled with tropical evergreens at the summits, with houses and gardens perched

all round on the brow. From the clefts there run mountain rills, dashing like spouts into the stream which roars unseen in the gorge. If you look downwards from the window on the other side of the bridge, you see the opening of the chasm, with the dark mountain walls to your right and left; and you stand as if suspended in the air, with the arch of the waterfall just visible, and the spray rising in a rainbow at an apparently immeasurable distance beneath your feet. Further below on the ledge of the rocks are old Moorish mills, with the streamlets from their dams flowing back in minor cascades into the channel from which they have been diverted; and on either side there are steep paths, along which one can go all round from the town gates, and from which at various points glimpses are caught of the magnificent scene, till you come to the lowest mill; and hence, if you look back, the fall, the cliffs, and the arch of the bridge which spans them rise aloft above you—the most imposing sight that nature and art ever combined to present to mortal eyes.

From the bridge, a broad, handsome street of a few hundred yards leads to the Alameda, a square garden on an open terrace on the cliffs, the magnificent trees of which, centuries old, a town corporation of Goths, Vandals, and even worse barbarians, have cut down to lay out the ground in flower-beds. From this promenade one sees the stream as, just issuing from

the chasm, it rushes headlong into the open glen, whence it winds round the cliffs on which the town stands, forming thus the moat to this natural stronghold.

Richard Ford, a master of the art of word-painting, thus describes the scene.

“The river, black as Styx, which has long struggled, heard but not seen, in the cold shadow of its rocky prison, now escapes, dashing joyously into light and freedom. The waters boil in the bright burning sun and glitter like the golden shower of Danaë. The giant element leaps with delicious bounds from rock to rock, until at last, broken, buffeted, and weary, it subsides into a gentle stream which steals like happiness away down a verdurous valley of flower and fruit, and offers no inapt emblem of the old Spaniard’s life, who ended in the quietism of the cloister a manhood spent in war, hardship and excitement.”

The view from the Ronda Alameda is not unlike that one has from the platform before the cathedral at Berne. The Sierra of which Ronda is the heart lays before the beholder as grand a mountain panorama as the Oberland can boast—at least, on a day on which the snowy Alpine summits are wrapped in their habitual clouds. But between Ronda and the Sierra there lies a broader stretch of green slopes, broken

up into minor hills and valleys teeming with rich crops and studded with the cottages and gardens and olive plantations, the summer delight and the only honest wealth of what, with all its contraband, impresses a stranger as a poverty-stricken place.

A town blessed with so sublime a situation cannot fail to have a variety of picturesque spots to charm its foreign visitors. But what is unique is the Tajo, the great chasm, the bridge, and the view from the Alameda.

Travellers may care to see the cathedral, the bull-ring, and the house of the Moorish King, with other things, the like of which may be seen to better purpose, and either on a larger scale or in greater perfection elsewhere. But, for my part, I merely visited the ruins of the French fort, from which the surrounding country can best be viewed, spread out as in a map, and where the French engineer already alluded to, Don Carlos Aimable, the benefactor who supplied the Rondeños with their delicious drinking-water from the mountains, pointed out the direction he intends giving to the railway which is to join Granada with St. Roque and Algesiras, and thus sweep past Gibraltar.

Three years before my visit Ronda could only be reached by the most villainous bridle-paths on mules. Besides the carriage road by which I travelled from

Gobantes, and which is in communication with Antequera, Loja, and Granada, another road across the Sierra direct to Cadiz is now being constructed. By the achievements which are now in progress or in contemplation, Ronda will thus soon be made accessible—in one day by road, and in a few hours by rail from various places; and the hotel, when encouraged by custom, will afford sufficient comfort to travellers who may be tempted to tarry a few days. The month which brings Ronda its greatest crowds is May, and the people of Malaga, Seville, and other places in southern Spain resort to the spot as the most agreeable summer residence. But the earlier spring—March or April—is the season when the fields are green and the streams full. What the guide-books call the “*emphatic feature*” of Ronda—*i.e.*, the fall of the Guadalvin—can only be seen to the best advantage at that time of the year.

CHAPTER VII.

GIBRALTAR.

The place revisited after forty-three years—The English Government in Gibraltar—Its good results—Its drawbacks—The Smugglers' Rock—Land smuggling—The frontier lines—Smuggling by sea—The position of Gibraltar—The difficulties of the English Government—Its conduct—The extent of the evil—Its only possible remedy.

It is not without a lively sensation that a man revisits a well-known spot after a forty-three years' absence. What interest one feels in seeing the marks of human progress perceptible in the look of familiar objects! How strange it seems to find the world proceeding at a so much more rapid rate than one's life! And in what other half-century in the history of the past, or probably of the future, can it be said that so portentous a change has been or may be effected as in these four or five last decades? Or, again, what other nation can boast of having given the world a more momentous impulse than the one which, more than

a century and a half ago, planted its standard on the Moor's castle, from which Gibraltar was named?

One cannot help inquiring what would be the condition of "The Rock" if it had been left in the Spaniard's possession these last 178 years, or to what extent the place would have grown had it been merely a Russian or Prussian garrison town. What had its former rulers ever done with it? Or what evidence had they given of their consciousness of the importance of its position?

The "Pillar" in antiquity had barely a name. In his description of Ulysses's venturous voyage, Dante, who mentions Ceuta and Seville, ignores the mediæval appellation of Abyla and Calpe, the two mountain masses on which Hercules was said to have written his *Ne plus ultra*. What part has Gibraltar ever played in the great achievements of Transatlantic discovery or of African circumnavigation? Or when did the world-wide empire of Charles V. or Philip II. claim this spot as the key of the Mediterranean, or use its bay as a naval station, or assume the actual command of the Straits, of which both coasts acknowledge the Spanish sway? The English alone may be said to have found out Gibraltar, and to have turned it to some purpose, first as the Gate of the Inland Sea, and now as the inlet to the remotest eastern oceans.

The movement of the Straits, as it was in the early

part of this century, was about the hundredth part of what it has become since the opening of the Suez Canal. Gibraltar levies no toll; it sets no hindrance to this immense traffic; hardly profits by it, for it buys but little, and has nothing to sell. It has not grown much, nor has it been greatly enriched; but how wonderfully improved it is! How beneficially has the hand of English civilisation been at work upon it! What rows of neat houses, what sweet tropical gardens, what smooth, solid, well-watered streets and paths, what cleanliness; how much comfort and luxury; what hotels, what libraries, what amount of well-being one finds in the narrow ledge of rock which the exigencies of military defence have been able to spare to its motley population; what immense relief it is to come to this oasis of English thrift out of the wilderness of Spanish dinginess and sloth!

There is only one drawback to it all—Gibraltar lives by smuggling. The people themselves have no hand in the unlawful business; they are honest traders and keep open shops. They no more inquire what becomes of the goods they dispose of than did the shopkeepers of Leghorn when that city was the free port of Tuscany. Within their walls and as far as the "lines" there is absolute free trade. It is for their neighbours to see to the protection of their frontier. Gibraltar looks not into the faces of its

customers; they may or may not be contrabandists. But what concern is it of the Rock? The Rock simply pockets its money and asks no questions.

Spain is surely not the only State which thinks itself aggrieved by the contraband that its own people or its neighbours carry on on its frontier. Italy has just as much to endure on the side of Switzerland. Enterprising men have established themselves at Chiasso, at Locarno, and other places south of the Alps, who take upon themselves the conveyance of any goods free of the duties which are demanded at the Italian custom-house and insure their safe deliverance upon a moderate consideration. "Your merchandise would be taxed 25, 30, or 40 per cent. for the benefit of the Government," says the smuggler; "you shall have it at your door upon a charge of only 10 per cent. if you entrust it to me." How the smuggler can manage the job we shall see by-and-by. Meanwhile it is very clear that the smuggler's trade would not so easily thrive if the duties were only 10 per cent., and that he would be utterly bankrupt if there were no duties at all.

Whether the Spaniards in general, and especially the people on the borders, are smugglers, as they are gamblers, by natural instinct, it would be unprofitable to inquire. The certain fact is that between the Spanish people and their Government there is at

heart a traditional war, and that whatever is done to the Government's injury is considered a meritorious action. It little matters whether Spain is a Monarchy or a Republic, an absolute or a representative State. The Government is always a public enemy. The administration never changes, or only from bad to worse. There has been of late a tremendous aggravation of public burdens, and particularly of indirect taxes, owing partly to the political convulsions of the past ten years, partly to the necessity of furthering long-neglected public works, but chiefly to the enormous number of State functionaries consequent on the very disorders of the revolutionary period, and to the incapacity, venality, and actual rapacity of many of them. The system here seems intended to create new offices and officials; to exact from them the smallest amount of work, pay them the lowest wages, and allow them to "help themselves."

I have spoken to many of the peasants on my way from Malaga and Ronda, and I found among them one universal cry that the labouring poor are robbed to enrich a set of idle placemen. And the heaviness of the taxes, oppressive as it is, is further aggravated by the vexatious, unequal, and senseless manner in which they are raised. The delays and chicanes, the capricious and uncertain rules and prescriptions, the circumlocution prevalent at Spanish custom-houses

have the effect of driving all trade from the frontier by main force, and many an honest man who would have no wish to cheat the revenue, and might even submit to unjust extortions, is compelled to put himself into the smuggler's hands solely to avoid the trouble and inconvenience which await him at the custom-house, and to deal with one thief for the mere chance of escaping a host of worst thieves.

Smuggling goes on from Gibraltar by land and sea, and the chief articles in which it is carried on are tobacco—which in Spain is a Government monopoly—tea, coffee, sugar, and other colonial goods, upon which heavy duties are demanded at the Spanish custom-houses. The smuggling of cotton tissues and other English manufactured goods has of late greatly decreased, indeed almost ceased, the Spanish authorities told me, because “protection has given so great a development to Catalan industry, that home competition has driven foreign produce from the Spanish market.” Tobacco is the chief offender.

The so-called “lines” which separate the British from the Spanish territory across the narrow neck or isthmus which makes the Rock a peninsula, are only a few hundred yards distant from the gates of Gibraltar. The Spaniards have on their own side so barred the way across the sandy flat, and allowed so narrow a passage through, that persons walking, riding,

or driving past their lines, must, as they go, brush past their custom-house officials and *carabineros*, or custom-house guards. Here, nevertheless, an endless number of petty smugglers—chiefly women and children—manage incessantly to go through with the forbidden merchandise secreted about their person. Large cart-loads of tobacco used till lately to be driven up to the last limits of British territory, where, in the open-air and in full daylight, those creatures, hundreds and hundreds at a time, divested themselves of their clothes, and padded themselves all over with the contents of the carts, put their rags on again, and thus laden, went their way into Spanish ground.

This practice is now discontinued. The Spanish Consul, Don Francisco Yebra de San Juan, with the zeal of a newly-appointed functionary, remonstrated with the English authorities about these open-air toilets, which he described as offensive to common decency, and the police from the Rock have now orders to bid the women and children to “move on” and the carts to “move off.”

In spite of this restrictive measure, however, there is little doubt that this same contraband trade by land is still carried on very nearly to the same extent, and one might ask why the Spanish *carabineros* do not submit suspected persons, laden mules, and vehicles to so strict a search as to put a stop to the lawless traffic. But the

movement of people across the line—only allowed from sunrise to sunset—is very brisk, and cannot be easily interfered with; and it is extremely probable that the speculators, of whom all that rabble of women and children are the mere agents, have the means of inducing the *carabineros* to wink at the tricks those monstrosly stout boys and girls, and those big women, in “an interesting state,” play upon them.

But, after all, even the Spanish authorities seem to think that such smuggling as is still here carried on by land and across the lines is almost beneath their notice, and that, as far as any extensive trade is concerned, Gibraltar, unapproachable as it is by road from any part of Spain, may be looked upon as an island, and its main intercourse must be by sea.

As an isolated spot, Gibraltar is not much more favourable to the Spanish smuggling trade than Tangiers, Tetuan, and the Spanish dependencies, Ceuta, Melilla, or any other port across the Straits would be. And, indeed, there is already a loud complaint against the French authorities at Oran—a place where large cargoes of tobacco from Gibraltar are landed, and whence they are afterwards stealthily conveyed to various points on the coast of Spain; for so lucrative, as it seems, is this clandestine and criminal tobacco trade, that it can easily bear the expenses of two or more voyages.

Gibraltar, however, in the Spaniards' opinion, offers to the smuggler the especial advantage of immediate proximity. Algeciras, at only five miles' distance across the Bay, is visited almost hourly by small ferry steamers and boats; with shoals of smugglers as their only passengers; and small craft of every description carry on the same intercourse with Estepona, Marbella, and all the coast as far as Malaga on one side, and with Tarifa and all the coast as far as Cadiz on the other. Steamers of larger size, of Spanish and other lines, take passengers on board with little attention to what they take with them as luggage, and as they proceed along the coast, they are in the dark, or even by daylight, approached by fishing boats, into which bales of tobacco and other forbidden merchandise are dropped, probably without the knowledge, possibly with the connivance, of the captains. For so universal, so all-pervading, is this smuggling business, if you believe the Spanish authorities, that many of the richest merchants, shipowners, and shipmasters, as well as all the well-to-do mountain population of these districts, are more or less actively engaged in it, and enrich themselves by it.

Against this wholesale trade, to prevent which the Spanish revenue officers by land and sea seem so utterly helpless, how can the English authorities at Gibraltar lend efficient aid?

The sale of tobacco, which is in Spain a Government monopoly, yields to that country an annual income of £3,200,000, one-half of which, however, is absorbed by the purchase, freight, and manufacture of the leaf, while the Custom-house officers, guards, etc., entail a further expense of £600,000—a charge especially arising from a vain endeavour to oppose the tobacco contraband. With all this the Government supply of tobacco (7,426,937 lbs.) only meets one-half of the demand; the other half is introduced by the smuggling trade. Gibraltar is undoubtedly the chief depôt of this illicit trade, the quantity finding its way from the Rock into Spain averaging between 80,000 cwt. and 100,000 cwt. yearly. The persons engaged in and living by this trade in Gibraltar, as manufacturers or dealers, number between 1600 and 2000, constituting with their families a population of 4000 to 6000.

To doom these people to starve or to look for other employment, and to suffer Gibraltar and her trade, the imports of which from England amount to three millions sterling a year, to perish; to do away with the commercial importance of this rock, past which British property to the amount of £100,000,000 goes every year—and all this only to do justice to Spain, and lend her a hand in the protection of her revenue

—might well strike every sensible man as a desperate measure.

Her Majesty's Government, nevertheless, at all times, and especially after the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in 1875, yielding to the diplomatic solicitations of the Ministers of King Alfonso XII., have taken this painful subject into serious consideration; and a variety of schemes has been proposed and discussed, with a view to lend Spain all the assistance in the protection of her revenue which a friendly State could reasonably expect from a just neighbour.

Lord Napier of Magdala, the present Governor of Gibraltar, has done all in his power to hinder the illegal traffic, both by land and sea, and by his order patrolling boats now row all night outside the harbour to oppose the egress of boats at unlawful hours.

And, at the time of my visit, the Spanish and English authorities lived on terms of perfect understanding and mutual amity, the Spaniards acknowledging that the English met their views and wishes in everything that lay in their power. But what can be done in a country like Spain, whose revenue cruisers, whenever in the discharge of their duties they are allowed to visit Gibraltar, seldom go back to their own coast without some bales of tobacco on board, the crew and officers not being above dabbling

in the unlawful trade which they are appointed to put down?

It seems, indeed, as necessary that something should be done, as it is difficult to decide what that something should be.

Lord Napier told the Spanish authorities that he would undertake to do away with all smuggling from Gibraltar if they would only place their custom-house officers and guards on their own side of the frontier under the orders and management of one of his own officials whom his Excellency should have particular reasons to trust. The remedy of the evil and of all evils in Spain would then be the same as is being applied to Egypt, and will probably soon have to be extended to Turkey. It consists in taking the direction of the Customs, of the Finance, and in general of every branch of the Government from the hands of a hopelessly rotten native administration, and making it over to trustworthy aliens.

That Spanish pride would never submit to such indignity is quite certain, but that the disorder admits of no other cure, many of the Spaniards themselves are thoroughly convinced.

Do away with the trade of Gibraltar, or even sink the Rock itself to the bottom of the sea, and the smuggling of tobacco into Spain will be removed to Tetuan or Tangier, to Oran or any other place ;

but it will thrive as freely as ever, so long as the monopoly and its abuses are maintained, and hold out such irresistible temptation to the smuggler engaged in the trade, to the merchant who supplies the capital and pockets the main interest, and the custom-house official who takes a bribe for his connivance with both of them.

But the truth is, the presence of the British flag at Gibraltar is a thorn in the side of Spain; a grievance to which that country will never be reconciled by anything that England may be able to do in her service and to her benefit.

"Move off, that I may see the sun," was the only boon that Diogenes would accept from Alexander, when that monarch was most earnest in the unbounded tender of his good-will.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPANISH HIGHWAYS.

The ways in and out of Gibraltar—Maritime ways—Spanish steamers—The ways by land—Malaga to Gibraltar—Ronda to Gibraltar—Ronda to Gaucin—View from Gaucin—The descent from Gaucin—Gaucin to Gibraltar—Gibraltar to Cadiz—Gibraltar to Algeciras—Algeciras to Tarifa—The wreck of a new road—Spanish ways and wayside inns—Peculiarities of Spanish character.

IF Gibraltar were an island in mid-ocean the way out of it could not be more difficult than I, with other travellers, found it during the first and second week in May, 1879.

The "Rock" lies about halfway between Malaga and Cadiz, on the southern coast of Spain, and the voyage to either port does not, in fair weather, exceed seven or eight hours. There are almost daily steamers plying, both along and across the straits, to the two above-mentioned places, and also to Tangier and Ceuta, to Tetuan and Oran. The boats are mostly English-

built, and have been tight and clever craft in their time ; but, as I had occasion to experience in the north-western provinces of the Peninsula, on the dreaded Biscay coast, it is the practice of Spanish shipowners to buy up English vessels when they are given up as unseaworthy, upon the false presumption that the timber, which is no longer fit to buffet the ever-vexed waves of the British Channel, may yet achieve good coasting work along the shores of their slumbering southern seas.

The clause, "Weather permitting," appearing in large letters in the printed announcement of the departure of Spanish steamers, is, therefore, no idle proviso. Scarcely any weather is good enough for them. The same way-bill, with only a change of date, is stuck up day after day at the doors of the hotels, and travellers, with their luggage all locked and strapped, and their bills all discussed and settled, sit in the hotel-halls, or stand on the pier, morning after morning, gazing at what seems to them a bright sun and smooth water, and heedless of the clouds crouching like sleeping lions on the dark mountain crests. But weather-wise mariners shake their heads and point to the sea-haze with ominous forebodings ; "in the scowl of heaven each face grows dark as they are speaking ;" and long before noon the unlucky luggage and its owners find their way back to the inn, and the dis-

appointed travellers again and again sit down to their breakfasts with what appetite they may.

The weather, indeed, had been that year exceptionally perverse—a combination of March gales with an incessant April deluge ; so that, even after a ten years' drought, Spanish husbandmen and vine-dressers began to think that "the rain had reached the deepest springs ;" and the navigation of the Straits, with a strong and stiff westerly breeze, and the ocean-tide setting in, is more than pleasure-seeking tourists consider a fair return for their money. The leviathans of the Peninsula and Oriental Company, of course, break through such puny obstacles like swallows through cobwebs ; and the stout boats blundering out of Dover night after night all through summer and winter, without even a thought about the utmost fury of the elements, would look upon a storm in these latitudes as mere child's play. But the Mediterranean, and especially the "gut" leading to it, is not without its perils. At all events, here sea-captains are wont to "look before they leap," and a party of young Englishmen of our acquaintance, bent on going to Malaga, "neck or nothing," could only prevail on the master of a small steamer to put to sea by a strong bribe of \$35 a head. In the other direction, *i.e.*, towards Tangier and Cape Spartel, and Trafalgar and Cadiz, no bribe could induce a Spanish mariner to venture.

“But, after all, why go by sea?” I said. “Gibraltar is not an island, whatever it might have been in antediluvian times. The Rock has a sandy neck, and along the beach and across the lines one can walk, ride, and drive into Spanish territory, where, whatever other dangers may encompass the traveller, he runs, at least, but little chance of death by drowning.” A land-route is what, as a rule, best suits me; and, as I had come to Gibraltar by land, I left Gibraltar for Cadiz in the same manner, and had thus an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the odds and ends of Spanish travelling out of the railway-track.

Would it interest the reader to know on what conditions one travels in Spain out of the railway-track? If so, I will do my best to tell him. I had made the trial as I came from Ronda to Gibraltar, and I had now to renew the experiment as I went from Gibraltar to Cadiz; and I almost think that both journeys, and especially the former, deserve to be reckoned among the memorable exploits of my life.

The shortest route from Malaga to Gibraltar is that along the coast *viâ* Marbella and Estepona, and that is described as a two days’ “hardish ride.” But from Malaga, as the reader is aware, I had gone up to Ronda by rail and coach. From Ronda, the journey could only be made in the saddle. There, therefore, I took horse, and had a two days’ very hard ride to Gibraltar.

We came down from the rock-built queen of the Sierra to the glen of the Guadairo; we clambered up and struggled down the rugged ridges of the Sierra; and before evening, after a six hours' ride, we reached our resting-place at Gaucin in time to scramble up to the old Moorish castle, and to survey one of the most glorious panoramas in the world—with the coasts of the two continents of Europe and Africa converging upon, and apparently meeting at the Straits, the grand Rock rising above it as a sentinel, with the Ape's Hill looming in the mist across the waters beyond.

It was a vast extent of land and sea to take in at a glance, and, as the crow flies, the distance to our journey's end seemed a trifle; but it took us, on the second day, ten hours' very hard riding to go down from Gaucin into the open valley of the Guadairo, to wade twice and three times through its winding channels, and follow its swampy bed to the cattle-ferry at Val Guadairo, where at last we left that stream behind us, and toiled wearily up and down every one of the many parallel mountain-ridges which slope down to the sea, lying on our path like so many barriers, across which we had to make our way to the beach and hence plunge deep in the sands to the English lines.

I was told that some English sportsmen often go over the distance between Ronda and Gibraltar in a

long summer day. But they must be in the saddle from dawn to sunset. For my own part, I found that journeys of this kind in Spain are much more easily traced out than described, or even imagined. What are here designated as bridle-paths, are both stony and marshy tracks; so steep, so abrupt and so straggling; the stones so big, so sharp, so loose; the mire in the holes so thick and so deep, that it is equally difficult for man, or horse, or mule to keep his footing; difficult to escape without a broken limb or a broken neck at every desperate plunge.

We came down from Gaucin to the Guadairo as we would have descended from a wall. I had never seen anything in the world so awfully steep, except the southern slope of the Gemmi upon the Leuker Bad in the Valais. I had been warned not to attempt riding down; but I had no choice, and could only stick to my saddle with grim resolution; for the waters were out, and a man on foot would have had to cross swamps where the mud reached up to his belt, and he would stumble at every step into deep morasses.

I was fortunately well-mounted; my strong, clever black horse—a loan from a kind friend—picked his way with a steady deliberation highly creditable both to his natural instinct and to the judgment and temper which long practice had imparted to him. I reached the bottom of the valley at the river-side safe and

sound ; but the guide and a fellow-traveller, a German Professor from Marburg, mounted on what looked by no means sorry mules, had each an awkward fall, and lay on the ground unable to move, though by good fortune, when picked up and disengaged from their pack-saddles, they were found to be more frightened than hurt, and escaped with a few hard bruises on their shins and knees, and with such a coating of thick yellow mud as rendered it impossible to tell the colour of their coats or hats, and would take them hours to scrape off with a knife.

It has been for centuries a fixed idea with the Spaniards that roads should be left to be made by the feet or hoofs of the men and beasts which use them. Not only does one see nowhere an attempt to lay out a path or to mend it when it breaks down, but the old highways which the Moors constructed in their own Eastern fashion, with sharp but well-connected paving-stones, hard to the foot-passengers, but marvellously safe for the iron-shod cattle—such as one still sees in and about Constantinople and throughout Turkey—are here, in the south of Spain, not only no help, but a great encumbrance, long neglect having dismantled them, and scattered the disjointed stones all over the sluicy paths, so as to make them stumbling-blocks at every step, slipping and rolling

under the treading foot often just on the most arduous and precipitous spots on your way.

The Spaniards have several thousand kilomètres of railways, though not one inch of the whole "net" is of their own making ; but they are, as a rule, left to make their own roads, and they have lately been somewhat shamed into the construction of a few national *carreteras*, or carriage-roads, and even of district by-roads in many of the provinces. As I have said, I was able to take the *diligence* from Bobadilla to Ronda, and again from Tarifa to San Fernando, and the road, though greatly damaged by the rain, could not be said to be absolutely bad. There was something less epic in the journey from Gibraltar to Cadiz, but the state of the roads was even more discreditable to the country. The route I chose, the shortest, along the coast, was rather tedious than fatiguing. A steam ferry-boat took me five miles across the Bay to Algeciras ; I had then a four hours' uncomfortable ride on horse-back to Tarifa ; I slept at Tarifa, whence, in the morning, I sat for ten dreary hours in a *diligence* which leaves every second day for San Fernando. From this latter place I proceeded in half-an-hour by train to Cadiz.

The scenery along the road is not destitute of interest, especially along that four hours' track that

must be achieved in the saddle; but my eyes were too busy with the ground at my horse's feet to allow me leisure to look at anything else. Between Tarifa and Algeciras a splendid carriage-road had been planned and carried out with great engineering skill, and regardless of expense, a score of years before; but for some reason or other it stopped short about half-way, and what had been accomplished was suffered to go to such utter ruin, that its *débris* were in many instances far more troublesome to get over than might have been the primitive path wrought by the ordinary tread of men and cattle in the same course of time. The stones with which the new *chaussée* had been paved lay all loose and scattered about, everyone a stumbling-block on the uneven ground; the streams, swollen by the rain, had to be waded over through the wreck of the broken bridges; and, in short, we suffered from the Spaniards' want of steadiness and perseverance more than we should have done had they been only guilty of their usual idleness and improvidence.

The roads are very trying, yet they are scarcely the greatest of the many evils of old Spain which still beset the traveller in this less than half civilised community.

He who has never made the experiment of a *venta* on the wayside or of a *posada* at the end of

a day's journey, can form no idea of the hospitality that meets a traveller applying for his ease at the door of a Spanish inn.

Incivility is unknown in Spain, but common attention from a man who knows he is to be paid for it is very hard to be got. His Iberian pride is hurt, not at the idea of taking your money, but of performing any service to earn it. The very shop-keeper at Madrid frowns at you as you cross his threshold, as if he took you for a shoplifter rather than a customer, and as if it were an insult to suppose he has anything for sale. The waiter or even the Boots of a hotel stands before you perplexed and irresolute, and seems hardly to consider it his duty to light you upstairs, or to rid you of your umbrella and wrappings and the like encumbrances. It is all mere manner, no doubt, and it springs from instincts of dignity and independence which deserve respect ; but it is by no means conducive to the traveller's comforts, and ill betide the poor wight in town or country who has to put up with an inn in which either the eating or the sleeping department is altogether in Spanish hands.

I say nothing of the cruel hardness of the saddles, of the dreadful jolting in the coaches, of the jaded and galled condition of the cattle, of the ruthless treatment these receive at the hands of their drivers, of the over-

charge at the coach-offices, the unpunctuality at the starting, and the unconscionably late hours of the arrival of the *diligence*. Administration of anything, public or private, is the "*cosa de España*" *par excellence*. Everybody does as seems to himself expedient. Waste and disorder, bribery and extortion, disregard of any law or duty, seem to pervade the whole community.

It is easy to understand from all this how it is that few travellers venture into Spain out of the many thousands who crowd the mountains of Switzerland or the cities of Italy from year's end to year's end. It would be a great error to think that Spain has not great natural or artistic beauties, or that her traditions have not as deep an interest as those of any other country. A still worse mistake it would be to fancy that the Spaniards, when you come to know them intimately, are deficient in those qualities which would entitle them to the sympathy and even admiration of their foreign visitors. In many respects they are not the last, in some—as, for instance, in heroic endurance—they are the first of European nations. But they do not know how to make a road or to keep an inn. These two things must be considered as part of that "good Government" which, according to the old legend, St. Fernando was unable to obtain from the Virgin amongst the manifold gifts that

were to make of Spain an Eden upon earth; for all other things men receive from the hands of a bountiful Providence, but their government they must make for themselves.

Unfortunately, whatever the natives of this country may think of their Government, foreign visitors are greatly concerned about roads and inns. Their acquaintance is not so much with such worthy Spaniards as live at home at ease, as with those whose business is on the highway, and who are not many degrees removed from the highwaymen, from whom, if all were known, they might be entitled to claim their descent. But things are as they are, and Heaven knows how many political convulsions and how many changes in the Constitution it will take to make Spaniards understand that things should be mended if they wish to be numbered among civilised nations; for, at least as far as roads and inns are concerned, it is still true that "Europe ends at the Pyrenees."

CHAPTER IX.

CADIZ AND JEREZ.

Cadiz—Its situation—Its attractions—Its decline—Cadiz to Jerez—
The land of sherry—The sherry trade—Variety of wines—Their
export—Sherry merchants—An English colony—Life at Jerez—
Anglo-Spanish hospitality—Wine-tasting.

CADIZ is a lovely spot. Its situation is equally unrivalled for strength and beauty, for business and pleasure. It lies all out at sea, on a rocky base, joined with the Continent by a long, low, circular neck, or isthmus, encompassing its bay like a pier, of which the city is the head.

The city is in the sea ; swimming in it like a white swan ; its stately rows of buildings bearing a resemblance to the bird's half-unfolded wings as it struggles to emerge from the waves. It is open to all sea-breezes ; safe from the extremes of heat and cold ; exempt from the exhalations and infections bred by the heat and moisture of the inland climate ; secure from attack when strenuously bent on defence.

On a slight acquaintance one would call Cadiz a sojourn fit for the gods. And the women, as they flit or sail about in the cool of the evening, on the Alameda or along the sea-wall, have certainly all the gait and bearing, the grace and dignity, of terrestrial goddesses.

But one tires of Cadiz in a day or two, nevertheless. It is a town without a country. It has no turf and no shade; a thoroughly modern city; its buildings all new; recent reconstruction having effaced from its ancient edifices every trace of their original style; every scar of the wounds that war inflicted.

Its interest is purely historical. Its business exhibits all the symptoms of the country's decline. Cadiz had a trade when Spain had an Empire. With the loss of the Colonies the importance, and to a great extent the prosperity, of this first-rate Atlantic port was at an end.

From Cadiz a short railway-journey of an hour and a half conveys a traveller to Jerez, in the centre of the land of sherry.

The country, on leaving Cadiz as you proceed along the isthmus to the mainland, past St. Fernando with its salt-mounds, past the Isle of Leon, and the formidable stronghold of the Trocadero, past Port Royal and Port St. Mary, assumes a peculiar character, which strikes a traveller as unlike anything he has seen in other districts of the adjoining region.

We have here a sunny, open, undulating landscape, spreading out to the sea with a uniform swell, with barely here and there a cluster of gentle eminences, which, in this rugged Iberian Peninsula, could hardly be called mountains. These smooth and easy uplands, scattered at random between the estuary of the Guadalquivir and the *Salinas*, or salt-marshes, of St. Fernando in the Cadiz Bay, and crossed throughout their length by the Rio Guadalete, constitute the famed four sherry districts; the hills being all crowned with vineyards; while the lower level and flat declivities are laid out in kitchen-gardens and cornfields.

There is hardly a tree to be seen in the whole extent, and although the country in May was green with the growing crops, fertilised by an unusually rainy season, we could conceive how bare and dreary must be the aspect of this unsheltered and sunburnt region after harvest-time.

Its capital, Jerez de la Frontera, a neat and civilised town, with broad streets lined with orange-trees and comfortable houses with marble-paved *patios*, or unroofed courts, enlivened by plashing fountains, harbours a population of 60,000 souls, rolling in wealth and luxury, though just then somewhat affected by the general depression of trade and saddened by the sight of loathsome beggars; among whose usual swarms of mere vagabonds were then to be seen many

able-bodied labourers attracted from the neighbouring agricultural localities, thrown out of work and driven to mendicancy by that improvidence which never fails to find Spain unprepared for hard times.

Of the four sherry districts above mentioned, the most important lies in the immediate vicinity of Jerez itself; the three others are scattered in various clusters near the *Puerto de Santa Maria*, or Port St. Mary, near St. Lucar de Barrameda, on the left bank of the estuary of the Guadalquivir, and near the little town or village of Trebujena, seven or eight miles to the north of Jerez.

Altogether, the land of sherry, properly so-called, covers a surface of about 13,660 hectares (the hectare equal to 2,471, or a little less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ English acres), and it exports, or used to export, an average of about five or six million gallons of sherry wine, of which 89 per cent. were shipped to Great Britain and her colonies. Under this general appellation of sherry, a variety of wines is produced, some of them of first, some of second-rate merit, and each of them to be had in its primitive purity, but more often blended in such mixtures as are supposed to be best suited to the taste of the consumers.

Not a little of the wine that is sent out as sherry, however, grows far away from the district that gives that wine its name. Wine quite as good, and sold

and drunk as sherry, is produced in other Andalusian provinces, all along the slopes of the Sierra Morena. The province of Huelva yields at least 40,000 or 50,000 butts of excellent liquor, and that of Seville a score of thousand butts, nearly the whole of which is bought up by the Jerez shippers; the owners of vineyards away from the favoured land lacking the thrift and enterprise which might open a direct way for their produce to foreign markets. Some of the best districts have even ceased to cultivate their vineyards from inability to procure custom. Between the bridge on the Guadalquivir at Seville and the neighbourhood of San Lucar la Mayor, I crossed a district known under the name of Aljarafe, which the Moors found highly favourable to the growth of the vine, and whose vineyards, inherited by the Christians, supplied for centuries the wine required for the Spanish settlements beyond the Atlantic. When those colonies became independent republics, the wine trade with them gradually came to an end, and most of the vines of the Aljarafe district fell out of cultivation—the olive almost everywhere superseding the wine-stock.

Having a harbour as well as a well-spread reputation of her own, Malaga contrives to hold her ground as a first-rate wine-growing district, in spite of the competition of more enterprising rivals. So does Granada, where the example of my friend, the agent of the

Duque de Ciudad Rodrigo has encouraged the natives to plant vineyards on a large scale. So does Cordova, whose Montilla, Moriles, and Aguilar, have always ranked very high among Spanish wines ; and where at a *quinta* or country-house of a nobleman near the old Moorish city I was given to taste what they called "ambrosia" and "nectar," the contents of two bottles of choice Montilla wine which, if we literally interpret the classical names, combined the qualities both of food and drink, and deserved in every respect to be served up to the immortals.

Still the great wine-shop of Spain is Jerez ; which, besides every variety of pale, brown, and golden sherry, produces also the Amontillado sherry, so called from its native filbert, or almond-like aroma, resembling that which peculiarly distinguishes the Montilla growth, and the *vino oloroso* (fragrant sherry) differing from the dry sherry by its bouquet. Jerez competes with the rival districts even in those branches of trade of which they once claimed the monopoly ; especially of those various kinds of Manzanilla, Pajarete, Muscadell, and Pedro Jimenes, common to Malaga and other localities, but which at Jerez are said to have reached the highest degree of exquisite flavour.

The wine trade of Jerez, as well as of other southern districts has been from time immemorial and is still in a great measure in the hands of aliens. The

easy-going Andalusian never seemed to know what to do with his wine besides drinking it, until long-headed strangers came among the native people to teach them how wine should be made so as to be safely sent abroad and turned into hard cash. Without the Gordons, the Domecks, the Garveys, and other English, German, and foreign shippers, what is now called sherry might probably never have come into existence. And what the above-named men have done at Jerez, a German Scholtz, a Scotch Mackenzie, or even some Spaniards from the northern provinces, such as Pedro Lopez, the Larios, the Heredias, the Loring, have achieved at Malaga, at Cadiz, at Port St. Mary, at Montilla.

The Andalusian is fit for little besides strumming the guitar and sitting at the bull-fight. Such trade and industry as exist in the country are almost exclusively in foreign hands. Seville is indebted to an Englishman, Mr. Pickman (now Marquis de Pickman) for her extensive earthenware manufactory. The lead mines of Linares, the copper mines of Belmez, those of Rio Tinto, Tarshish, and others, are entirely managed by foreigners. The quicksilver mines of Almaden, which were state property, are now pawned to a great French money-lender. It is to the same great Jewish banker that Spain was indebted for the completion of the Seville-Huelva railway and the bridge on the

Guadalquivir communicating with it. All the public works which have ever been undertaken and accomplished in the Peninsula, such as the Madrid markets opened in 1875, required foreign capital, engineering, and management. And even such native railway kings as Salamanca and Gandara, who have enriched themselves by jobs of public utility in foreign countries, when they went to work in their own most frequently acted in combination with foreign companies, and were swayed by considerations rather of French or other extraneous, than of Spanish national interests.

Though Seville has long been the natural outlet of the rich produce of the Valley of the Guadalquivir, and is still maintaining much of its importance in spite of the opening of the Seville and Huelva Railway—water communication proving as yet less expensive and not much less expeditious—the Jerez wine-shippers use as their harbour for the export of their sherry the Trocadero, near Cadiz, with which most of their *bodegas*, or cellars, are in communication. Much of the wine of other sherry districts is embarked at Port St. Mary or St. Lucar de Barrameda. The wines and other produce of Cordova, Granada, and Jaen are shipped at Malaga.

I tarried at Jerez long enough to make excellent friends with some of the most successful sherry merchants. In spite of a temporary lull in their trade,

I found them cheerful and sanguine, and fully confident that their business rests on a rock which neither natural convulsions nor Government provisions can shake. They are an amiable, hospitable, intelligent set of men ; most of them Spaniards by birth, and frequently even by faith, though almost invariably of foreign, chiefly of English, extraction. There is nothing Spanish in their views, in their tastes, or habits. Their *bodegas* are as lofty as cathedrals, as extensive as palaces ; but they live in fine, clean, well-furnished, princely houses, with marble-paved courts and staircases, cool and fresh, with sweet wives and well brought up children, boasting a long line of wine-trading ancestry.

They ride and drive English blood horses, and their turn-outs make quite a show along the Alamedas and round the handsome Plaza de las Palmas. They have magnificent *à l'Anglaise* clubs for the wine-merchants and their junior partners, and clubs for their clerks. They have fine villas in the country and little farms and vineyards, and large stable-yards for the breeding of fine studs of horses. They have introduced horse-racing as an institution ; they have a Jockey Club ; and yearly meetings here and at Cadiz and Seville, constituting, with the better classes of the foreign colony in other cities, a friendly association leading to the frequent interchange of visits and to the co-operation of their numbers for a variety of useful purposes.

Although it is justly said that "two of a trade seldom agree," and although, as I have said, strong antagonism of interests keeps the great houses asunder, their various members show great readiness to "sink the shop" in their social intercourse, and a stranger can detect nothing but symptoms of cordiality and goodwill between them. They have not a little local patriotism—a sincere attachment to the town and country in which their lot is cast; but keep aloof from its politics and bestow upon Spain and her Government no more praise than they deserve.

To a stranger from any country, and especially from England, their hospitality is as unbounded as it is invaluable. A visit to their cellars is, however, neither a light nor even a very safe achievement. The premises of Gonzales & Co., of Misa and Bertinati, of Domeck, and a score of others, with their long rows of casks, with the barrel-manufacturing yards, and all the machinery thereunto appertaining, cannot be thoroughly viewed in less than two or three hours' time. There are 20,000 casks, and how many of them must be tapped!

"Those who are not stupefied by drink," says Ford, "come out much edified." Your kind guide along those never-ending rows has a hundred cogent arguments to induce you to stop and sip. "This is the wine of the comet year; that dates from the famous

1842; that other is the King's wine; further is a butt which took the fancy of the Prince of Wales." And then, "This is the first wine my father made when he inherited the business from his uncle fifty or sixty years ago. This is my wife's favourite wine." (Very sweet!) "This is the darling of my mother-in-law." (Very sour!) And finally we come to the Nestorian butt of 150 years ago, where you must not just put your lips to the brim of the glass, but are expected "to drain it to the last drop, to the good health of your host and hostess and to the prosperity of the Jerez trade.

Wonderful to say, it is quite possible to go through the whole ordeal and live!

With some of these most agreeable Jerez friends I travelled northwards to attend the Madrid races.

CHAPTER X.

MADRID RACES.

Horse-racing in Spain—In the south—In Madrid—Horse-races *versus* bull-fights—The bull-fight frenzy in Spain—How encouraged—Extravagance of the bull-ring—High wages paid to the performers—Brutality of the sport—Its effects on the national character—Spaniard's love for horse-races—The good and evil of horse-races—Gambling propensities of the Spanish people—What the people pay for bull-fights—What they would have to pay for horse-races.

THE horse-racing season in the year 1879 was very successful throughout Spain. I heard a great deal about it in the south, where Englishmen, or men of English extraction, grown rich in various branches of business, own, breed, and train either thoroughbreds imported from their mother-country, or colts obtained by a cross between their own island mares and whatever remains of old Spanish and Arab stock.

In Spain, as in France, in Italy and elsewhere, the sport is entirely exotic; the owners, trainers, and riders are mostly strangers to the country. The Spanish people, however, among whom the old Moorish

pastime of cock-fighting is still in high honour, take to horse-racing with amazing eagerness and zest. In the south I only attended the course at the Seville fair, and there the enjoyment was somewhat marred by the fall of a little rain, and the threat of a great deal of it. But at Malaga, at Cadiz, at Jerez, and at Cordova, great crowds had assembled, and the railways supplied excursion tickets to an unprecedented multitude of passengers, attracted by the popularity of those hippic amusements which in the Andalusian cities have ceased to be a novelty.

At Madrid, the racing took place at the new hippodrome which was then being laid out at the end of the drive of the Fuente Castellana, in sight of the snow-capped Sierra de Guadarrama. As an extra treat, the *élite* of the Madrid society, both Spanish and foreign, about 500 persons, were invited to a private race-meeting by the Duque de Fernan-Nuñez (afterwards Spanish Ambassador at Paris), a nobleman of Italian extraction, and born at Milan, but allied by marriage with some of the most conspicuous families of Spanish grandees, who did the honours of his house and of the racecourse at his country-seat of La Palenca (an estate bordering on the Royal Park and Palace of Aranjuez, two hours by rail from Madrid) with a grace and courtesy worthy the best days of chivalrous Spain.

I should hardly have deemed it worth while to be present at horse-races, either at Madrid or La Palenca, as I am not by any means a "horsey" man, have a horror of all betting and gambling, and look upon all sport as something extraneous to the subject which brought me to the Peninsula.

But my interest had been suddenly awakened by a few words which fell almost inadvertently from the lips of an amiable, liberal, and accomplished gentleman from Jerez, who takes a prominent part in the doings of all those Spanish hippodromes, and who told me that his object and that of many of his associates was so to promote the taste of the Spanish people of all classes for the pleasures of the racecourse, as in time to wean them from their native performances in the bull-ring.

Horse-races to supersede bull-fights! Humanity to step in between the savage horned brute and his defenceless equine victim! The news was almost too good to be true, and even the merest chance of such a result was entitled to the consideration of any man aiming at a promotion of civilised ideas throughout the world.

Bull-fights have certainly taken a strong hold of the heart and soul of the Spanish nation, and are cherished with all the unreasoning fondness of patriotic pride. On all great occasions of public exultation, when

the Romans would have stepped up to the Capitol to render thanks to their tutelar divinities, a Spanish multitude give vent to their grateful feelings by repairing *en masse* to the bull-ring. The new buildings sacred to their beloved *Tauromachia* at Malaga, at Seville, and Madrid, have been reared at a high cost and not without regard to architectural magnificence. Revolutionary heroes of the Prim or Serrano stamp, coming in after a successful *pronunciamiento* or a well-fought national battle, take their seats in the State gallery at a bull-ring as a first evidence of their assumption of the Supreme Power. Kings restored after a few years' interregnum like Alfonso XII., or issuing from the Atocha Church with a newly-wedded Queen, celebrate either their accession or their nuptials by taking themselves and their brides to the bulls. The half-mournful, half-triumphal, commemoration of the heroes and martyrs of the *Dos de Mayo*, and the feast-day of San Isidro, the peasant saint for whose benefit angels whistled at the plough while the pious labourer knelt at his devotions—are all celebrated by a more than usual slaughter of four-footed creatures in the arena. Reliance on the Spaniards' allegiance, it was said, could always be calculated upon as long as bread and bulls were to be had in plenty; but experience has proved that it little matters how short the supply of bread may fall, so there be no stint in the performance at the bull-ring.

Few persons in England imagine what sums are lavished by the Spaniards on bulls and bull-baiters. The *torero* trade is encouraged by a scale of fees altogether out of proportion with all other professions. An *espada* or *matador* is paid at the rate of £50 to £60, and even £100, for every bull he slaughters, and although the majority of them "live like fighting-cocks," putting no limits to their extravagance and self-indulgence, some of them accumulate large fortunes. One of them, Cuchares, died at sixty worth \$200,000, or £40,000; and another, Lagartijo, has built for himself a house in his native place, Cordova, a model of taste and elegance, yet not out of keeping with his yearly revenue—an income originally springing from the earnings of his calling, but husbanded with rare economy, and possibly also eked out by a little speculation at the lottery shop or the Stock Exchange. Although these worthies almost invariably spring from the dregs of the population, familiarity with them, as with prize-fighters in England, is courted by the amateurs, some of them *pollos* or scions of the upper classes; and, like the gladiators of old, muscular strength and brute courage entitle them to the favours of their *majas*, and even, it is added, of females of a certain rank and character.

There can be little difference of opinion as to the brutality of this darling Spanish pastime. The danger

to human life has been reduced to a *minimum*, and ten times as many fatal accidents occur in one season in the hunting-field in the shires, or by swimming, boating, skating, and yachting in English waters as are heard of in the Spanish bull-fight from year's end to year's end. The superior agility of the *chulos*, or footmen, in outstripping or dodging the bull is so evident that their evolutions round the enraged animal, their achievements with flaunting cloaks, barbed darts, exploding crackers, and vaulting-poles, repeated at every *corrida* six and even eight times in the course of an afternoon, leave even the most eager spectators free from any uneasiness as to the possible results of their daring feats, and satiated and even bored by their sameness. And with respect to the final duel between the bull and the *matador* or *espada*, that only takes place when the strength and rage of the brute are all spent, and it can scarcely be considered fair game.

The tilt between the bull and the mounted *picadores*, or pikemen, would be more exciting if the issue were not almost invariably the torture and death of the poor blindfolded horses; yet there is no doubt that were the goring and disembowelling of these broken-down screws, the streams of blood from their breasts, the trailing and treading of their entrails under their hoofs, discontinued and put down by law, as they

ought to be, the performance would lose its attraction, and the ring be speedily deserted.

Lovers of the bull-fight, both native and foreign, must labour under the stupid conceit that horseflesh is inanimate matter, or else the sight of those maimed limbs and torn vitals quivering in a prolonged agony could not fail to affect their nerves, and make an irresistible appeal to their sympathies. To train young women and children to such sights, to familiarise their tender minds with scenes a thousand times more revolting than anyone would witness at the shambles, is to blunt and deaden the sensibilities of a whole race. There can be no argument in favour of these sickening exhibitions which could not be equally applied to the reproduction of those fights of wild-beasts, in which the Romans and other heathens delighted; and, indeed, one might question whether any absolutely helpless and unarmed being like the horse at the bull-fight was ever thus wantonly butchered in any ancient circus.

It is to little purpose that people plead inveterate tastes and habits, and quote the fact that foreign visitors—such as some of the younger secretaries and attachés of Her Majesty's Legation—take to these sports with an enthusiasm exceeding that of the Spaniards themselves. We are too well aware that

a lurking instinct of cruelty lies at the bottom of our human nature, and is apt to break out under the slightest provocation or indulgence; but it is precisely to correct such tendencies that the efforts of civilisation, of the law and religion, should be directed; and I have heard many among the most honourable Spaniards deploring the various agencies that are at work to minister to the perverted propensities of their countrymen in this respect, and heartily wishing for the removal of a practice which they denounce as a foul blot on their national character.

Can a reform in the sports of a whole people be effected by the introduction of other people's amusements? Can the jockey take the place of the *matador*?

I have lately seen a mass of more than 50,000 people, one-fourth of the inhabitants of Madrid, crowding the race-course at the Fuente Castellana—a multitude, if we take into account the statistics of population, proportionally exceeding the crowds assembling even for the Derby on Epsom Downs. I have seen more patience exhibited in the intervals, and witnessed more frenzy at the “heats” than I ever observed at any English or even Irish cup-day. I have heard the names of the favourites on the cards, of Mr. Davies's Trovador and Ole Ole, of the Duke Fernan-

Nuñez's Pagnotte, Rigolade, and Petit Verre, of Señor Aladro's Eclipse, Segundo, and others, called out with such a thunder of loud voices as I scarcely thought could ever proceed from human lungs; and I asked myself whether an institution which here might be said to be still in its infancy could not, and would not, if properly encouraged, soon attain such development and rise to such popularity as to engross all the faculties and monopolise all the spare time and spare cash of Spanish pleasure-seekers.

Horse-racing is in itself a far nobler sport, more rational, more humane, and at least not less exciting than the bull-fight; and it may be equally recommended on the score of the peculiar charm attached to all out-of-door entertainment—that of affording an opportunity for the enjoyment of free wholesome air, for the exchange of friendly greetings with genial acquaintances, and for the women's display of their bright attire, and the gratification of their desire to see and be seen.

We may be told that there are drawbacks to horse-racing, and doubtless much of the favour with which the new sport has been welcomed on Spanish ground may be traced to that practice of betting of which the English give so liberal an example. The crowd at the betting-booths of the Madrid race-course was

incessant, and the sums which passed from hand to hand at the end of each race, due allowance being made for the difference between *duros* and "sovs.," were hardly less formidable than those appearing on the books of our fast club men. With all the jargon and slang of the English turf, not a little of the trickery and roguery of the black-leg fraternity may be expected to creep in. Be it so; one must take the chance of that; one must put up with good and evil, and act on the principle that "*Un diavolo caccia l'altro.*" Much would be gained if one could succeed in softening a people's ferocity even by ministering to its improvidence; and, for that matter, no foreign importation can make these Spaniards more arrant, desperate gamblers than they are. In spite of the law strictly forbidding all games of hazard, *trente et quarante* is played without disguise, day and night, at every casino in every Spanish town. Between the Puerta del Sol and the House of Deputies in the Carrera Geronimo, where the law was made, there are, to say the least, half a score of downright "hells;" nor can a better state of things be expected in a country where the State holds a huge gambling place at the lottery, and sets to work old women, priests, and other evil instruments to sow the seeds of the most abject superstition among the lowest classes, and engage them in a game of chance by which

the Treasury realises an annual net sum of at least 50,000,000 reals (£500,000).

Independently of the social and moral improvement which might be wrought among the Spaniards by the gradual discontinuance and the final abolition of their national game, any measure tending to that result would also be recommendable on economical grounds. The bull-fight is a very expensive pastime. Persons conversant with the subject tell us that in an average of 400 to 500 *corridas* during the year throughout the kingdom, about 2,400 bulls and 3,600 horses are killed. The latter are absolutely of no value, but the bulls are a serious loss to the cattle-breeders, as they must be allowed to run wild in uncultivated districts all their lifetime, instead of being fitted for use at the plough or put to the country cart; and they cannot be utilised after death, as their meat, spoiled by that brief hour of fury and agony, is an abomination to the butcher, and has to be sold at the lowest price among the poorest populace outside the ring.

The sum these animals represent is reckoned at £74,000 yearly; and, with the tickets sold at the door, the bull-fight is supposed to cause to the Spanish nation an annual outlay of at least £1,200,000. Horse-racing may be in many respects a more costly institution, but to say nothing of the fact that, instead of leading to the

wanton waste of useful cattle, it powerfully contributes to the improvement of the breed of horses ; it has also this inestimable advantage—that the extravagance falls, or may be made to fall, on the classes which may best afford its indulgence, and that the poor people can enjoy the sport without paying for admittance and absolutely free of expense.

I am thoroughly convinced that, were fair play and an open competition allowed by the authorities, were a treat at the race-course advertised as taking place on the same afternoon and at precisely the same hour that a *funcion* is announced as coming off at the bull-ring, an immediate division would take place in the crowd pouring out of Madrid in quest of pleasure ; and that, if not immediately, certainly at least at no great distance of time, the stream setting out of the Alcala gate to patronise the bull-fight would be greatly outnumbered by the tide flowing along the drive of Fuente Castellana on their way to the hippodrome.

For although, in spite of crushing taxes, scanty crops, famine prices, and the prevalence of ubiquitous and infinite beggary, the Spaniard seems always able to procure gold and silver enough for the gratification of his craving for enjoyment, he is not so unthriftly as to hesitate between an amusement for which he must put his hand to his pocket and one which enables him

to kill time without being mulcted for it at the ticket-office. Horse-races may be offered to him on the same terms as a gift horse, in whose mouth we are taught that it is wisdom not to look too particularly.

CHAPTER XI.

SPANISH ROGUES.

A Yorkshire squire and a Yorkshire lawyer—An International swindle defeated by the Author's interference—Character of Spanish roguery—*Picaresque* literature—Spanish talent for forgery—Prison life in Spain—Prisons the head-quarters of swindlers—A swindlers' gang at Ceuta—A successful swindle.

It was as I attended the horse-races in Madrid that I received from an old friend in England a letter that gave me the first inkling of the underground roguery that is going on throughout Spain.

My friend, it should be premised, resides in a county, the people of which are not generally charged with want of acuteness; and he belongs to a profession, on the members of which is incumbent the duty of being particularly wide-awake.

"He expected," he wrote, "soon to have the pleasure of seeing me in Madrid," and wished to acquaint me with the circumstances which induced

him to travel so far south. "A client of his," he went on, explaining, "a worthy squire, had applied for his advice, and favoured him with the following important revelation."

A few years ago, soon after the fall of Cartagena, two of the well-known leaders of the hare-brained republican movement that led to that catastrophe—General Contreras and Señor Galdéz—both deputies of the Constituent Cortes, came as fugitives to London, and lodged in the Bank of England a sum amounting to several millions of reals in state securities, obtaining for them, of course, the regular certificates of receipt from the Bank.

The two Spanish gentlemen left after some time for the continent, General Contreras taking up his quarters as a political exile in France, and Señor Galdéz venturing under a disguise into Spain, where he had the misfortune to be recognised, arrested, and shut up in the Saladero, the central gaol in Madrid.

The certificates had been left in England in trusty hands, in a trunk belonging to Señor Galdéz, who from his prison had sent directions that the trunk should be sent by rail to Madrid, addressed to a person enjoying his full confidence. This person, however, had some claims upon Señor Galdéz for an old debt of 5,000*f.*, or about £200, and insisted upon payment of this sum before he would either part with the trunk or allow

it to be opened and the precious certificates to be taken from it.

The matter required delicate handling, for Señor Galdéz was a prisoner, General Contreras an exile, both under trial, and about the money they had placed in the Bank there might lie some mystery, into which it was not desirable that inquiry should be made.

An easy way of getting at the contents of the trunk could be found if anyone would think it worth while to supply the £200, settle the claims of Señor Galdéz's creditor, and, laying hold of the certificates, convey them to England and withdraw the securities from the Bank. A man, whose name was given, and whose address was in the Calle de la Abada, or Rhinoceros Street, Madrid, would undertake to carry through the negotiation, if anyone would call upon him with the needful £200 and allow him half-an-hour to rescue the trunk and deliver the certificates. The worthy Yorkshire squire, to whom intimation had been conveyed of the *coup* there was to be made, looked upon the story as extremely probable; he fancied it was corroborated by a good deal of circumstantial evidence, and thought he might venture on the speculation; and my friend, his professional adviser, undertook to do the job for him, and carry the £200 to the Calle de la Abada, taking, however, as a precaution, a revolver with him, and intending to deliver the money in Bank

of England notes, the numbers of which should be stopped the moment he found out that any trick was being played on his good faith.

Upon receiving the letter which my friend had the happy inspiration to write to me, I answered by quoting Cardinal Pandulph's words :

How green you are, and fresh in this old world !

told him that Señor Galdéz was no longer a prisoner, that General Contreras had come back from banishment, that the house in the Calle de la Abada was a notorious haunt of malefactors and den of thieves, and that such a dodge as had been tried on his worthy squire was a stale device, which, in English slang, would be called a "do," a "sell," or a "plant," and in Spain is known under the designation of an *entierro*, or burial.

Honesty is not more uncommon in Spain than in any other country, especially among the lower classes and when implicitly trusted, exceptions now and then only occurring among Government officials. But, as in other countries, there are also rogues in Spain, and the peculiarity of Spanish roguery lies in this—that it trusts to subtlety and *finesse* rather than to violence for the attainment of its ends, maintaining the character that was given it from the first by such heroes of *picaresque* romance as Lazarillo de Tormes, Guzman

de Alfarache, Gines de Passamonte, and others portrayed by men of the highest distinction in Spanish literature.

By far the greater majority of Spanish criminals are forgers; nowhere are false documents more skillfully drawn up, and signatures, seals, stamps, coins, and other public or private marks imitated with more consummate mastery; nowhere is there so large a gang, or, as one might say, guild and brotherhood, of clever scoundrels so intimately associated, so firmly relying on mutual co-operation and intelligence, so constantly and actively engaged in the furtherance of their fraudulent plots.

The very *élite* of these rascals are under lock and key; safe at the Saladero at Madrid, in some of the bagnios at the seaports, or at Ceuta and other *presidios* or garrison towns on the north coast of Africa. Finance in Spain is conducted on the paltriest penny-wise principles. Views of sordid economy preside over the management of Spanish gaols. The buildings into which criminals are thrown are all old and out of repair. The gaolers and turnkeys are in many instances rogues not many degrees removed from the rogues intrusted to their charge. At Ceuta and in other State fortresses convicts condemned for life, in consideration of good conduct, are made keepers of convicts. The military are on duty at the doors and

round the prison walls, but inside, in the courts, cells, and corridors, the gaol is a kind of "liberty hall," or "happy family cage," where gaol-birds swarm and chirp promiscuously. They keep up, by spoken and written messages, an incessant intercourse with the outside world of rascaldom, treasure up miscellaneous information about all persons and things, and are in possession of moulds, stamps, and other tools for their forging trade.

The negligence with which prisoners of the most dangerous classes are kept in Spain may be argued from the constant fact that, whenever an inspection occurs in the Madrid Saladero, hundreds of *navajas* (knives or daggers) are found secreted about the prisoners' persons, and also from the striking case of one of them—a youth of good family, but lost in evil courses, and locked up for swindling—who loudly declared in court, on receiving sentence, that "he would only stay in so long as the prison air suited him," and who, in fact, walked off in full daylight when it pleased him, on the strength of a Government order for his immediate release—an order which looked perfectly genuine and regular, yet of which the paper, handwriting, signature, stamp, etc., were all the prisoner's masterly handiwork.

The prison, therefore, is in Spain the head-quarters and the active workshops of most of the *entierros*, or burials, by which the unwary are caught. The

rascally fraternity numbers among its members able men, travelled men, conversant in many languages, and acquainted with names, addresses, and all interesting particulars of men predisposed to be dupes.

In the leisure hours of that prison-life, in the secrecy of that vast conspiracy, plots are deeply laid, slowly matured, and carefully hatched. Fed, lodged, and clothed at the public expense, the rascals can afford to bide their time, and to put up with frequent disappointment. One would say that gain is not their primary object, that what they chiefly care for is the "fun" of the thing, the excitement arising from watching the various stages of a thriving intrigue, and the gratified vanity at the display of uncommon ingenuity.

Upon mentioning the attempt at imposition to which my lawyer friend, or the worthy Yorkshire squire, his client, so nearly fell a victim, I found my story capped by my Spanish friends with endless accounts of other "burials" of that nature, attended with various success, the sharpers generally practising less on man's credulity than upon that instinct to covet other men's goods and to seek a short cut to fortune, which makes many persons, otherwise and to all appearance thoroughly honourable, unscrupulous as to any profit that may accrue to them from other people's roguery.

Anecdotes bearing resemblance to the case referred

to were volunteered on all sides. Some of them have dropped from my memory, others could not be retailed without wearying the reader by their sameness. But there was a recent case which impressed me more forcibly than the others, and of this I venture to condense the particulars, as they seem to me to sum up and strikingly to illustrate the windings and turnings of *picaresque* ingenuity.

A French landowner, by name Armand Carron, a resident of a small town in the Department of Finistère, received some time ago a letter from Ceuta, signed Santiago (or James) Carron. The writer explained that he was a native of Finistère, and precisely of the place where the Frenchman resided; that he was a namesake and a member of the landowner's family, son of a first cousin of his, who had left France many years ago, and settled in Spain with wife and three sons, of whom he, Santiago Carron, alone now survived.

This Santiago, the tale went on, had been placed by his father in the military college at Segovia, had served through all the subaltern ranks as an artillery officer, had risen to the rank of brigadier, and in that capacity had been sent out in command of the district of the Cinco Villas in Cuba, where he had married the daughter of Don Diego Calderon, a wealthy Havannah merchant, owner of vast sugar plantations; his wife had brought him a dowry of 4,000,000 reals (£40,000),

and had died, leaving him a daughter called, after her mother, Juanita, now about seventeen years old.

This girl, the only object of her father's love and care, had been by him sent to Europe, and placed for her education at the Convent and College of the *Sacré Cœur* at Chamartin, near Madrid.

His career in the army, and his wedded life in Cuba, had been for many years very fortunate. He had been laden with honours by a just Government, and received many proofs of his country's trust; but lately the officer in charge of the chest of the military district at *Cinco Villas* had absconded, and run away to New York with a sum of 2,000,000 reals; and as he, the brigadier, was answerable for his subaltern's conduct, and was not willing to sacrifice one-half of his wife's—now his daughter's—fortune to pay for the defaulter, he had been summoned to Spain, and then relegated, or sent as a prisoner on parole to the fortress at Ceuta to take his trial before a court-martial, which, owing to the dilatoriness of all things in Spain, might perhaps sit till doomsday.

After thus giving an account of himself, and of all his belongings, the brigadier proceeded to explain the reasons which induced him to address himself to his unknown French relative.

He had, he said, suffered much from long exposure to the heat of a tropical climate; he felt old before his

time, and his hereditary enemy the gout had by several sharp inner twinges made him aware of the precariousness of his tenure of life. He had that only daughter in the world, sole heiress of a considerable patrimony, who might at any moment be deprived of her natural protector, and for whose final education and introduction into society it was his duty to provide. The girl had great natural gifts, had inherited her mother's Creole beauty, and the accounts of her proficiency given by the nuns at Chamartin were most flattering to his paternal pride. He was anxious to appoint a guardian to his heiress-daughter, and he could think of no one fitter in every respect for that charge than his only relative, M. Armand Carron.

"Yes," he went on, "he, the Brigadier, had lately been diligently looking over his father's papers; had found among them very numerous and interesting family documents—ample evidence that a hearty and loving correspondence had for many years been kept up between his (the Brigadier's) father, Vincent Carron, and the father of M. Armand Carron, also called Armand;" and he followed up the narrative with frequent allusions to several incidents occurring in the early youth of the two cousins, and descriptions of localities, common acquaintances, and the usual joys and sorrows alternating in their domestic circles; altogether, a well-contrived, plausible story, verging so closely

upon probability as to avoid any possible stumble on the rock of truth.

M. Armand Carron, of Finistère, did not think it right or expedient to cast doubt on the genuineness of the communication. He answered the Brigadier's appeal by calling him "my dear cousin;" said he had a perfect recollection of his father's frequent allusions to Vincent Carron, the cousin who had grown up with him in their common home, and only left their native town on his arriving at man's estate; and after heartily congratulating the Brigadier on his conspicuous career, which reflected so much lustre on their common name, and condoling with him about the momentary cloud that had now—undeservedly, he felt sure—settled upon it, assured his newly-found relative of all his sympathy and of his readiness, should anything happen, which he sincerely deprecated, to look upon the Brigadier's daughter as his own child, receive her in the bosom of his family, and take that care of her which so precious a jewel as she was described to be must fully deserve.

So the matter was settled. The correspondence between the two newly-found relatives continued for six or seven months, and became very affectionate and confidential. The Brigadier sent the Frenchman his photograph and that of his daughter, both taken in Havannah and bearing the name and trade mark of

the artist. The one represented a middle-aged officer of high rank in full uniform, and with the Grand Cross of San Hermenegildo on his breast, a fine manly countenance with long, gray, silky moustache; the other exhibited the arch, pretty countenance of a brunette in her teens, with smooth bands of raven hair on either side of her low forehead, and the shade of a moonlit night in her dark eyes, a bright, blooming creature with dimples and pouting lips, and the look of humour and frolic and sense in every feature.

Together with the photographs came a letter of Juanita Carron to the Brigadier, her father, dated from the convent, and bearing the Chamartin postmark, in which the girl congratulated her father on his discovery of his Finistère relative, expressed a firm confidence that her loving father would long be spared to her, and concluded that she would be, for her own part, in the worst event, willing to acknowledge her relative as a second father, and acquiesce in every arrangement that might be made for her welfare.

To what extent M. Armand Carron of Finistère gave in to the mystification that seemed grounded on so much circumstantial evidence it would not be easy to decide. Probably he said, with the old sage, "*Si credo, quid mali? Si non credo, quid boni?*" Nothing was asked of him. If it was all a bubble and burst, no loss would come to him. But if there was truth in the

tale, why M. Armand Carron was himself a widower, had an only son, twenty years old; and if the girl came to his house as a ward and with a million francs in her apron, why, how could all that harm him or any of his?

Seven months passed; and the post one morning brought M. Armand Carron a letter with the Ceuta post-mark, but no longer in his cousin's handwriting.

The writer, who signed himself Don Francisco Muños, parish priest of San Pedro, at Ceuta, announced the death of Brigadier Santiago Carron, which had occurred seven days before the date of the letter.

He stated that the Brigadier, brought to extremity by a sudden attack of the gout, had been in his last hours attended by him, Don Francisco, in his clerical capacity, who had been instructed to wind up all his earthly affairs, both in Ceuta and in Madrid, and further empowered to remove the Señorita Juanita, the Brigadier's daughter, from the Chamartín Convent, and take charge of her during her journey to Finistère, where she should be delivered into the hands of her appointed guardian.

The priest's letter enclosed the printed obituary hand-bill announcing the Brigadier's decease agreeably to Spanish custom; the last will and testament of the deceased, appointing M. Armand Carron sole executor, guardian, and trustee of his only daughter Juanita,

and intrusting to him the management of her fortune of 1,000,000f. (£40,000), mentioning the banks in Paris and Amsterdam in which that sum lay in good State securities, the whole duly drawn up by notary, with witnesses' signatures, seals, etc., and even with certificates of the Brigadier's burial bearing the signatures and stamps of the civil and military authorities at Ceuta and those of the Governor in command of the place.

The priest had proved himself a good man of business, and everything was as perfectly in order as the most captious and cavillous attorney might desire.

At the close of this minute statement the priest expressed his readiness to comply with the Brigadier's instructions by travelling to Madrid, receiving the young Juanita from the hands of the *Sacré Cœur* nuns, and continuing with her the journey to Finistère, immediately upon hearing from M. Armand Carron that he was prepared to receive his lovely ward.

M. Armand Carron answered by return of post that his house and arms were open to welcome his relative's orphan child. Whereupon there came, after some time, another letter from Don Francisco Muñoz, explaining that the Brigadier, although the most methodic and careful of men, had left some trifling debts at Ceuta, and there were the doctor's and the undertaker's bills to

be settled; the travelling expenses for himself and the young lady, which he, the priest, was not able to defray. There were, besides, the papers, deeds, books, and other portable property left by the Brigadier, some of it very valuable, but also bulky—among which were the certificates of the State securities deposited in the French and Dutch banks—which, at the express desire of the deceased, would have at once to be conveyed to Finistère. Of all this, he, the priest, would have to take charge; so that, what with the boarding money and fees owing to the nuns, and the clothes, linen, and other necessaries the young lady might require to fit herself for appearance in the world, an expense would have to be incurred of which it was difficult to calculate the precise amount. The conclusion was that he could not undertake the journey unless M. Armand Carron supplied him with a round sum of money, say 4,000f., which he would greatly oblige by sending in French bank-notes, and in a registered letter, addressed not to him, the priest, but to Doña Dolores Mazaredo, a pious woman, whom her reduced fortunes had compelled to take service as a washerwoman of the Ceuta State prison.

The reason alleged by the priest for receiving the money in this roundabout way was that, as the Brigadier had died in debt to the State, and the Government might suspect that property belonging

to the deceased had come into his, the priest's, charge, and be induced to lay an embargo on the Brigadier's effects, it was desirable that every precaution should be taken to disarm suspicion and prevent inquiry.

In due time the letter from Finistère enclosing the 4,000f. in crisp bank-notes was delivered to the washerwoman, and from her passed into the hands of the sharp blades whose deep-laid plan and transcendent inventive powers were thus crowned with full success.

Four thousand francs (£160) may seem no great reward for a work stretching over several months, in which several persons must have been engaged, and the secret of which was shared by a still greater number. But Spanish rogues are artists, and "*L'artiste se paye d'honneur.*"

Very likely the whole lot of gaol-birds at Ceuta were entertained by the authors of the successful dodge at a sumptuous banquet, and some dozens of champagne were drunk to the health of M. Armand Carron, with some wise remarks about that greed for his cousin's money which had dazzled his understanding and perverted his conscience, making him fall into a pit which he might probably have avoided, had it not been for the tempting bait of the four millions of reals and of a grand match for his hopeful son and heir.

Had the plain daughter of a penniless father been tendered to his guardianship, he would in all probability have been more on his guard; he would have been less eager in his admission of his kinsman's claims, and more particular in his inquiry as to the truth of the story.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STONE MONASTERY.

Madrid to Alhama of Aragon—Alhama to the stone monastery—Scenery on the road—Its early dates—Its present state—Its grounds—Ravines—Waterfalls—The marvels of land and water—The horse-tail fall—Wood scenery—Its unique character on this spot—Effects of the destruction of woods on the soil and climate.

I HAD heard so much from Spanish friends of the wonders of the Monasterio de Piedra of Aragon, that, having occasion to travel from Madrid to Saragossa, I made up my mind to alight at the Alhama station, and proceed at once to the place.

From Alhama, a favourite summer resort of gouty invalids, a waggonette with four seats, drawn by two powerful mules, conveyed me to my destination.

The nine or ten miles of country we were driven over in two hours were only too much in keeping with the dreary region we had traversed by rail from Madrid. A dismal valley, shut in between two chains of bare, bleak, and unpicturesque mountains; here and

there a few patches of badly tilled fields with mangy crops; no other signs of vegetation than, at rare intervals, a stunted walnut-tree, or a thin fringe of consumptive poplars dying of thirst; and no habitation, save, at every two or three miles' distance, the cantonier's hut, at the door of which the man stood, "hoarse from long silence," repaying, by his eager salutation, the blessing of the sight of human faces breaking on the sameness of his cheerless solitude—such was the look of the country.

At a turning of the road we drove past Nuevalos, a savage town, or village, perched high on the rock, and flanked with musty old towers, and, leaving that on our right, and some forlorn barns and a dilapidated church with a squat dome on our left, we toiled up a winding ascent, at the top of which our driver turned round with the comforting intelligence that "we were about to arrive," and lashing his mules for a spurt downhill, he presently cantered up to a long, low building and pulled up before a clumsy red-painted door—the entrance to the Monastery.

The monastery dates from the end of the twelfth century, an epoch in which men were still haunted by the terrors of the approaching end of the world, and in which, in the apprehension of the impending catastrophe, the whole race seemed divided between the few who sought a refuge from the coming wrath

in the solitude of the cloisters and the many who toiled and moiled to enrich them and keep them in clover.

In the year 1194, in April, we are told, thirteen monks from the then still recently founded monastery of Poblet, near Tarragona, migrated into Aragon, with a view to establish a colony of their order, the Benedictine, under the leadership of Don Gaufrido de Rocaberti, a missionary from the Abbey of Clairvaux, who had known St. Bernard, and under the patronage of King Alfonso II. of Aragon and of his two successors, Don Pedro II. and Don Jaime the Conqueror. They made choice of a hollow in the mountains, crossed by the Rio Piedra, a stream flowing from the savage Sierra de Moncayo (or Bald Mountain chain) so called from its bare summit, a nakedness which was then a distinction, but which is now only too common to every hill, high or low, throughout the Peninsula.

The river, which took its name of Piedra or Stone from the petrifying nature of its waters, after crossing the hollow from south to north, glides down northwards for a few miles into a valley, where it soon blends its course with that of the sister stream of the Jalon.

The monastery was built on a rock on the eastern side of the hollow or shell, in the shape of a quadrangle enclosing a court, on one side of which was the abode of the monks, facing the church or chapel, with the

infirmary and the offices closing the two other sides. The church, an edifice in the early Gothic, encumbered and marred by hideous superstructures in later times, is now a mass of ruins. The infirmary has been utterly demolished, but the monastery itself, still in a wonderful state of preservation, has been turned into an hotel, one of the most comfortable and best-conducted country inns in Spain, the monks' cells all along the lofty corridors being used as excellent bedrooms, and the refectory still doing duty as a magnificent dining-hall.

The hall itself and part of the corridors, with the grand staircase, have all the Gothic grandeur of the primitive structure. Other parts of the buildings are either restorations or additions of a more recent epoch, and their style is plain modern Roman. The whole has been spoiled but tidied and brightened by a coating of plaster and whitewash. In the summer season, between June and October, the house is crowded with fashionable visitors from Alhama and families from all the neighbouring towns resorting to the spot for its coolness. But at the early and inclement time of the year of our visit, we were the only guests, and our tread along the corridors and our voices in the refectory were the only sounds disturbing the stillness of this big whitened sepulchre.

Very different was the world outside. The hollow

upon which we looked from our windows was teeming with a vegetation of the most profuse luxuriance, enlivened by the rushing waters from a hundred falling rills, and by the warbling of birds, among which we could distinguish the piping notes of the nightingales, which seem to have here their trysting-place from all the barren wilds of Aragon. We issued forth in the morning, and went down into the maze of the woods, along the course or at the foot of the waterfalls, the number of which is legion, but twelve of which are singled out by name, and are called the *Cola de Caballo*, or Horse-tail, the Fall of Iris, of the Upper and Lower Ash-trees, Diana's Bath, the Trinity, the Solitary, the Shady, the Capricious, etc.—all falling from the rocks, all flowing through clumps of forest trees, all rivalling the shapes, some the size, and in many instances the character of the Handeck, the Giessbach, the Staubach, and other cascades the pride of Switzerland.

Along the paths, in the most sequestered nooks, we came to holes in the rock—the Artist's Grotto, that of the Panther, that of the Bacchante, and other caves—all roofed with those marvellous bunches of stalactites, from which the Moors took the models of their splendid vaults of the Alhambra of Granada and of the Alcazar of Seville; and passed thus from wonder to wonder, from rapture to rapture, across this moist and verdant park, everywhere laid out by Nature in

the most consummate taste, and supplied by art with every convenience of paths and steps and bridges, and benches and charming recesses, God's work going, as it were, through a second creation at the hand of man.

The stream, upon reaching the brim of this great shell, or gully, vaults over the huge perpendicular rock which fences in the woods of the monastery's grounds; then, dashing against the trunks of the trees and the stony prominences to which their roots cling, distributes its waters into a hundred channels, here gliding rapidly, there tumbling madly, from ledge to ledge, from crag to crag, making thus one fall and a hundred cataracts, so that as you look upwards you see the various rills of the Iris Fall, of the Lower Ash-tree and Upper Ash-tree Falls, all glittering through the verdure, one above the other, chasing one another in joyous tumult and confusion, here going asunder, there meeting again, a water revelry like that of Lodore, a fall merging into a labyrinth of falls, coming from a height of nearly 400ft., and sliding over a declivity of about 150ft. at the base.

These and the other rivulets, straying from the main channels in every direction, reassemble at the spot where the glen narrows about a hundred yards at the foot of the monastery, at a crossing of the paths called Las Cuatro Calles, and collect their forces

for a last plunge down the Horse-tail Fall—a great cataract going headlong over a precipice of 174ft., and sinking into a cauldron of rock where the torrent boils and gurgles, sending its spray high up in the air and filling the glen with its deafening roar.

From the summit of this fall, where it swells in an arch as it takes its leap, not unlike the bend in the horse-tail, from which it takes its name—down a flight of steps dug in the bowels of the rock through a series of natural grottoes, all encrusted with stalactites—a way is made to the foot of the cascade, ending in a slippery walk around and behind it. In the rear of the vast column of water lies the opening of a lofty cave, a great hall of unsurpassed splendour and majesty, rearing its roof in the shape of the Gothic arch of the nave of some great gigantic cathedral, with masses of petrified antediluvian vegetation hanging in rich clusters like fantastic appendages to the groining of the vault; the walls, the roof, and the whole inside glittering with sparkling diamonds in the afternoon sun as its undimmed light pierced fitfully in through the transparent veil or crystal curtain of that moving volume of water, and smiling with all the hues of the rainbow, as it hovered lovingly over its foaming spray.

It was the crowning sight of a long succession of beautiful views. The very guide stood still, entranced, spell-bound; and even my travelling companion, who

had literally roamed all over the world, and taken stock of absolutely all it contains, even he was compelled to acknowledge that the scene before us had something passing beautiful, something unique, and was reminded that the Kentucky cave, however big, as everything American must needs be, was, however, not festooned with such glorious stalactites as this was, and had not a great waterfall doing duty as a prism at its entrance; that it did not, in fact, combine such a variety of attractions as nature and art mustered here for our delight. For my own part, having, I know not whether to say the sad misfortune or the rare gift of forgetting, in the presence of anything that pleases me at the moment, whatever I have seen and admired before, I gave myself up heart and soul to the actual enjoyment; and if I bestowed a thought on the rest of the world, it was only to regret that all I loved were not there to enjoy with their bodily eyes what I well knew I could never bring before their mind's eyes by description.

Below the Horse-tail Fall the stream subsides into a comparatively quiet channel, the water expanding into a variety of fresh translucent pools, which the thrifty and enterprising landlord has turned to the purposes of a trout-breeding ground, applying to it all the modern contrivances of pisciculture. Industry never chose a more lovely spot for the scene of its exertions. The

pools stretch over a large extent of level surface deeply embosomed in a recess of the glen, where a great gap opens between the all-enclosing wall of the perpendicular rock, and a great, rugged, equally inaccessible mass detached from it, and rising in sublime isolation along it, so close as not to be distinguishable from the parent stony mass, at a distance; yet, upon a nearer view, leaving a sufficient space between them to allow room for a series of ponds, almost attaining the dimensions of little lakes, all fresh and pure, showing through their pellucid wavelets the green bottom, where the growing brood glide in happy security, and reflecting, as in a picture, the abrupt precipices of the encompassing mountains.

The progress along these fish nurseries was a series of delightful surprises. The gap between the two enormous rocky masses was winding and turning, unfolding itself at every step as at the shifting of the scenes on the stage, the mountains a mass of ashy gray blended and blurred with dingy orange where the surface peeled off, all fringed at the base with green wood, mostly young ash and poplar, with here and there a weeping willow throwing its canopy over the paths, vaulting over and shading without encumbering the way, and dipping its branches into the cool, rippling waters beneath. The ponds in this recess are not, as we first supposed, fed by the brawling brooks from

the waterfalls, but owe their existence to a fine spring at the head of the gap, which we reached after a long lingering stroll, and where we sat round the margin enjoying one of the most marvellous mountain views the world can exhibit.

The glen of the Piedra round the Monastery is what nothing else is, yet what all else might and should be, and perhaps once was, throughout the mountains of Aragon. What is everywhere else merely the bare skeleton of the country is here covered with its flesh and blood. The natives of this district tell you that the rich grove of the Monastery, its deep umbrage of tall elms, ash and oak trees, and planes and willows of many hundred years' growth, were formerly no oasis in the desert, no island in an ocean of barrenness. The Pyrenees themselves and all the parallel Sierras, were masses of dense forests, like "huge brooms sweeping the starry vault." The mountain woods swept the upper atmosphere; the vapours clung to their verdure, absorbed the moisture, and bred the showers which freshened and fertilised the plain, tempered the keenness of the winds, slackened the ruinous fury of the torrents, and assuaged the inclemency of the climate. The mountain forest, like a Spanish *capa*, was an equal protection against heat and cold. There was a time when a *Moncayo*, or bald hill-top or hill-side, was an exception, and received that designation from the very

rarity of the phenomenon. Now utter, universal bareness is the rule. The blind avarice and improvidence, the perverse rage of man, has made a scene of havoc and desolation of the whole upper region of the Peninsula. Human stupidity has cut down the wood to the last stick, and the consequence has been the dissolution and crumbling of the mountain, the ravage of the valley, the obstruction of the river, the flooding of the plain, the spread of the marsh, the poverty of the country, the fickleness, unhealthiness, and general deterioration of the climate. The beauty, amenity, and fertility of the grounds surrounding the Monastery of Piedra prove how much could have been and could still be achieved by abstaining from the wanton destruction of the woods and by paying attention to their preservation or to the restoration of their growth. Had the monks been more covetous or less richly endowed, or more insensible to natural beauty, and less piously inclined to respect God's works, or had the man who purchased their confiscated property been only intent on immediate gain—the axe would have done its work, every tree and bush would long since have disappeared, and the rich orchard, the teeming kitchen-garden, the fresh pasture, the luxuriant crops which make the old monastic domain highly productive, would now be as useless a waste as the rest of the bleak surrounding territory. The mere Aragonese boors

who come as daily visitors from the neighbourhood, and the better educated gentry from the cities who take up their quarters with mine host for their summer *villeggiatura* have an eye for the beauty of the locality, and love it and praise it with as genuine an enthusiasm as might be exhibited by the most experienced tourist. But they look upon it as a privileged spot, a hallowed ground, a phenomenon, a miracle, as if its verdure were the peculiar gift bestowed by Heaven on the monks, as if the trees had been reared for them by the angels, and not, as they were, fostered by the monks themselves with loving care, screened from the blast of the winter winds, saved from the parching heats of the summer droughts, replanted when felled for use, and, in short, tended and nurtured with the devout and intelligent activity of men, reasoning beings fully aware that the most precious gifts of Providence may be turned into curses by men's neglect, and sloth, and stolidity.

CHAPTER XIII.

MONSERRAT.

Monserrat from the road—Aspect of the mountain—The route from Barcelona—The monastery—Its basis—Its shape—Its summit—Panorama from the summit—A stone monk.

THE delight I had experienced during my short stay at the “Stone Monastery,” a locality of which till lately I had not even suspected the existence, induced me to proceed on a visit to another monastic establishment, of which I had heard and read much all my lifetime.

I had often been struck, as I travelled from Saragossa to Barcelona, by the sight of a portentous mountain mass, rising in sublime isolation above the undulating region I was traversing, and assuming a variety of fantastic shapes as I passed from station to station.

That mountain, I well knew, was Monserrat (Mons Serratus), so-named from its jagged summits, bearing a resemblance to the teeth of a saw, a peculiar shape,

which, combined with its position, makes it unlike any other spot in the world.

Amid the rocks on the top of that huge mountain, a thousand years ago, a monastery was founded round the shrine of a holy image of the Virgin, which, after being for many years concealed and at last miraculously revealed, came to a halt here; "se hizo inmovil," says the legend, "intimating her desire to go no further."

Want of leisure, or stress of inclement weather, had hitherto prevented me visiting this renowned sanctuary; but on this occasion (September, 1879), all circumstances being propitious, I stopped at the Monistrol Station, 51 kilomètres from Barcelona, where I took my seat in a *diligence*, in waiting for passengers to the Monastery. We drove down to the Llobregat, a Pyrenean stream, crossed it on a stone bridge, and, after a short halt at the town of Monistrol, began the ascent of the mountain.

The road proceeds for a short distance along the bank of the river, shaded by an avenue of plane trees and acacias, then strikes up in zigzags with such steepness that, in spite of the smoothness of the way, and the strength of six capital mules, the lumbering conveyance toils up at a foot's pace, too trying for the impatience of able-bodied travellers, many of whom, if they are English or German, prefer to walk in the burning sun, even at the risk of being deemed crazy

by the wondering easy-going natives. After a two hours' journey men and beasts were all up at the Monastery; we attended to our comforts at the refreshment-rooms, and made arrangements for our night-quarters; and for the rest of the long summer day, and part of the following, we proceeded, on foot or mounted, to the inspection of the marvels of the place.

Man's work did not detain us long. The Monastery is a huge, many-storied pile of buildings, plain and square, gray with age, yet not more venerable than any barrack or factory of the same size would be, with no pretension to art and no vestige of antiquity, save in one of the inner walls, once a façade, where a row of Saxon, surmounted by another row of Norman arches, bespeaks the Gothic instincts of the framers of the original structure. The church or chapel, opening at the inner quadrangle of the monastery, but invisible outside from any point, was opened for evening service, lighted up with a profusion of tapers, and enlivened by men and children's voices, with accompanying strains of a fine deep-toned organ. What could be seen of the inside was a modern Roman high-domed edifice, stately yet commonplace, with nothing deserving particular notice, save the exquisitely wrought *reja*, or iron railing, enclosing the main altar, no contemptible specimen of that branch of art

in which Spaniards in former times excelled, and of which they still claim the supremacy.

But we had not come to see the monks' home or their place of worship. The site on which that home is reared is the loftiest and grandest temple, and the most formidable citadel that ever was worked by God's own hands. Not only this Monastery—big pile of masonry as it is, and standing as it does, squeezed in on its narrow ledge, with an abyss of untold fathoms at its feet, and the weight of three great rocky masses over its head—but even the dome of St. Peter's at Rome, or the marble roof of Milan's cathedral, would look both mean in size and tame in taste, crushed by the Titanic grandeur, by the sublime harmony, and the terrible power exhibited by the Supreme Architect in the mountain itself, in which He was pleased to rear His masterpiece on earth.

Montserrat stands on a round basis about four-and-twenty miles in circumference, and rises to the height of 3,800 feet. It is considerably taller than Vesuvius, and has something of the loftiness of the Rigi, but the character of its formation is unlike that of any other mountain, though rocks of a similar transcendent boldness and savageness occur all along the road as you come down the southern slope of the Pyrenees, especially on the track from Canfranc over Jaca and Huesca. The Italians would call Montserrat a "Monte

Orfano," and its complete isolation suggests, indeed, the notion of a child strayed from the mountain-chain, all forlorn and unacknowledged, yet exhibiting even in its castaway condition much of the massiveness, and still more of the ruggedness, of form and feature common to the mighty giants with whom it claims kindred.

As you look up from the basis, the mountain presents a steep slope of almost bare rocks, all laid out and divided at intervals into several—eight or ten—ranges of precipitous ravines, rising one above the other like a flight of heavenward stairs, every step as you ascend being marked by a ledge with its fringe of shrubbery, the verdure of Alpine vegetation struggling into life through every crack and cranny of the perpendicular cliff itself. Those who paint the degrees of the mountain of Purgatory imagined by Dante, in some measure reproduce the various stages of the ascent of Monserrat—with this difference, that instead of the uniform and continuous spiral line leading up to Dante's Eden, the steps of Monserrat are traced by wavy, irregular lines, obeying no other rule than that of the infinite variety and of the inimitable beauty of nature.

For about two-thirds, or what seems like it to the measurement of man's eye, the Monserrat mountain maintains thus the compact shape of a squat cone; but the upper part is broken up into huge rocky

masses, bulging out, some in straight walls, others in round bastions of massive strongholds, the cliffs here falling down, sheer and smooth, as if impervious to the working of the waters, there all seamed and scored and indented by the mountain rills digging their channels into the heart of the rock, and fretting without wearing its great stone ribs, which stand up in long rows of cylindrical columns, in some cases bearing a strange resemblance to the pipes of a gigantic church organ.

Further up, the crest is formed by the jagged Teeth of the Saw. Here are a thousand points and *aiguilles* exceeding the quaintness and variety of those on the top of Mont Blanc, here clustering in groups of pinnacles tapering like the fingers on a man's hand, there merging and smoothing down into one another like the round shields of warriors proceeding in close array to the assault of a fortress; further, a whole multitude of pointed rocky excrescences, which have been and can be equally compared to rough-hewn chessmen in battle array, or to chessmen strewn carelessly over the board—some standing up sharp and erect, some fallen prostrate and broken—a complete chaos of mountain-tops as to whose resemblance to familiar objects imagination is free to abandon itself to whatever freaks first present themselves to its apprehension.

The whole mountain mass is calcareous on the surface, with deep deposits of conglomerate in its recesses, a brittle material eternally dissolving and crumbling, and it is the nature of such a formation to assume every variety of fanciful, droll, and weird appearances, baffling the utmost extent of man's inventive powers, and setting all his means of imitation or reproduction at defiance.

Oddity, however, is hardly the prevailing character of the Monserrat scenery; the overpowering sensation is that of a perpetual contrast between terror and loveliness. There is hardly a spot where you do not feel that you stand on a thousand feet precipice; hardly a nook where some great boulder as big as the Vatican Palace is not suspended over your head, ready, as you fancy, to slide down in an avalanche at every blast of the storm wind. There are huge straight columns, the bases and shafts of which have thus been crumbling away for thousands of years, while the top, or, as one may say, the capital, still hangs up in air on nothing, clinging to the rock as it were by mere magnetic adhesion, like Mahomet's coffin, or like a turret or pepper-box vaulting over the wall of some Rhenish castle, by the quaint trick of Gothic architectural ingenuity.

Impervious as those crags and cliffs appear, they are, however, crossed by paths running like mere

threads on the edge of the precipice, yet sufficiently wide as you tread along them, and so well flanked by the omnipresent brushwood, that you proceed in perfect security, unaware of the abyss that yawns beneath your feet.

It was by such paths that we made the tour of the various chapels, grottoes, and other places recommended as the curiosities of the mountain. By such paths we were led across and along the labyrinth of the mountain summit, threading from one to another of its endless *aiguilles*, and at last, after two hours' toil—an epic donkey ride—we reached St. Geronimo's Hermitage.

Here we scrambled up a rocky dome close at hand, which overlooked all other heights, and has a view of "all the kingdoms of the earth," *i.e.*, of all Catalonia.

On the east and south we surveyed the whole line of coast from Gerona to Tarragona, and the blue sea with the Balearic Isles bathing in its thin haze. On the north, in the front of us, the Llobregat valley, with the golden stubble of its garnered harvest, and the hope of its ripening vintage, over hill and dale; and both on the north and west the open plain, with its hundred busy towns, and the straight cut of the railway line; and the amphitheatre of the mountains closed by the Pyrenean wall, with its glittering snow-line on its crest.

Only a few steps from the dome we looked down on a crevice, about two yards wide, a fearful chasm, running down between two perfectly smooth and straight walls of rock, running down far beyond reach of man's ken, and we speculated how many times a man falling or throwing himself from that height would be bumped, tossed, and bandied from one of those rocky partitions to the other, as helpless as a shuttlecock between two battledores. At every step of the traveller, no matter in what direction, the mountain gives him the shudders; yet so well are the grounds laid out as to remove the idea of serious danger; and the ruggedness of the rocks is so admirably softened by the luxuriance of the foliage which borders them, that, as I said, the awe of the sublimity is everywhere blended with the charm of the loveliness of the landscape.

The greed of the guides and donkey-drivers to scrape a few reals is apt to lead unwary visitors astray in quest of endless hermitages and shrines and caves, represented as localities of special interest, such as the Grotto of Esperanza, the Pozo del Diablo, Pozo del Infierno, and other holes, which do not deserve to be seen even as mere curiosities. For the sensation wrought upon the mind by the general character and the magnificent panorama of the appalling mountain should not, I think, be frittered away in the gratification of a trivial

curiosity by venturing into the darkness of low depths which rely on the artificial aid of Bengal and electric lights for a theatrical effect.

Nor is there much either edifying or amusing in the legends of saints or devils with which a pious tradition has contrived to crowd the various haunts of the hoary solitude. It seems as if everyone ought to feel how mean and wretched, how saddening and humiliating, are the evidences of such grovelling superstition in presence of the natural marvels with which the might of the Maker was put forth, as if to strike man with a sense of his infinite littleness, and to raise him to the contemplation of God's own boundless greatness.

Had any of us doubted of the narrow boundary everywhere bringing the sublime into contact with the ridiculous, we should have been made aware of it by one of our party who pointed out to us the strange shape of a huge rock in the immediate vicinity of St. Geronimo's Hermitage on the mountain summit, which bore an undeniable resemblance to a well-fed monk, chance having sketched out the figure and countenance with astonishing minuteness, smoothing down the low forehead, digging out the deep holes of the pig's eyes, chiselling out the prominent nose, the pursed-up lip, the receding under jaw, and not forgetting the tuft of hair over the crown of the head,

the thickness of the bull-neck, and the roundness of the abdominal protuberance.

In that *renfrogné* look and in that portly shape nature herself appeared to have intended a libel on monkish self-indulgence—a malicious libel, since Monserrat was the abode of slim and studious Benedictines and not of gross Franciscans; and no one has forgotten how, in 1522, no less a man than Ignatius Loyola, a broken-down and wounded soldier, abided here for a season, and, in the convent chapel, watched his arms in the night, like a Don Quixote of Christian chivalry, and dubbed himself the Virgin's Knight, in which capacity he presently issued forth as the founder of that military order of the redoubted Company of Jesus to which, whatever other faults may be imputed, no one could justly ascribe the degrading vice of gluttony, or the habits of idle leisure and pampered luxury.

CHAPTER XIV.

POBLET.

Improvement in Barcelona—Extensive new quarters—A new park—
New boulevards—Barcelona to Tarragona—Aspect of the latter
city—Tarragona to Poblet—Interests on the road—Catalonian
husbandry—Poblet—Its former splendour—Its desecration and
ruin.

To accomplish my pilgrimage to the old Crow's Nests of north-eastern Spain I had yet to see Poblet, and my way to Poblet lay over Barcelona and Tarragona.

The country along the railway-line, after passing Lerida, was smiling with the green of young vines, planted within the year on fields which, at the time of my former visit, four years before, were or looked utterly barren, or only dotted here and there with straggling and half-starved olive-trees. In three or four years the growth of wine, already considerable in Catalonia, would at least be doubled, and the demand of the produce would be sure to meet the supply. The Catalonian wine is all good, but the vineyards of the

Priorato and Benicarlo have acquired a name and become typical. To buy their bread these provinces have to attend to their husbandry so as to be able to spare their neighbours some of their oranges and other fruits, their famous nuts and almonds, their oil and cork, but especially their wine, a great deal of which is exported, chiefly from Barcelona to Bordeaux, there "to enrich," as Ford says, "poor, thin, sour clarets for the English and American markets."

I was struck, as I entered Barcelona, with the almost prodigious improvement the place had undergone since King Alfonso, at the time of his accession, in January 1875, first touched Spanish soil here. The schemes for the *ensanche*, or aggrandisement, and embellishment of the place, which at that time were barely laid, had, in the interval, made immense steps towards their fulfilment. Revolution had done for Barcelona what fire does for Stamboul. It had given it air and breathing-room.

The Rambla, which was the main artery of the old city, crossing it almost north and south from end to end, remained as it was, and its double row of stately plane-trees, which, unlike those of the Paris boulevards, had never fallen victims to the popular rage for barricade-building in the worst political disturbances, were still shooting up higher than ever,

all fresh and bright in their prime, affording the coolness of their grateful shade to the swarming multitude always lounging beneath them, and saving the inmates of the houses on either side the expense of blinds or curtains to their front drawing-room windows.

But beyond the limits of this old rival of the Berlin Unter den Linden, the town boasted now, or would soon boast, four other great long avenues, far wider and more magnificent, more liberally planted, and lined with buildings of loftier pretensions than the Rambla itself, and these encompassed on its four sides that labyrinth of narrow, ill-paved streets, which constituted the old city. A process analogous to that was lately accomplished at Vienna, separating the little pent up city from the open and unlimited circumference of splendid suburbs.

From the Plaza de Cataluña, at the upper or northern end of the old Rambla, there ran the long straight line of the Paseo de Gracia, a considerable, yet almost insensible ascent, ending at the suburb of the same name of Gracia, now a town of 35,000 inhabitants. This main avenue threw out right and left other equally wide avenues, some of which, like the Calle de Cortes, Calle de la Deputacion, etc., followed the line of the old walls and bastions, leading to the Parque, which was rapidly filling up the space

hitherto occupied by the pentagonal Bourbon citadel of Philip V.

This park, already sufficiently advanced to be a delight to the population on a fine afternoon, had been in a short time laid out in beautiful walks and drives, all planted with lime, elm, and plane trees, with rich flower-beds, with an avenue of magnolias growing in this mildest of climates almost to the size of English oaks. On the other side these promenades had been prolonged on the sea-shore, following the line of the old *Muralla del Mar*, now in progress of demolition, and proceeded still along shore, and in the rear of the harbour, up to the very skirts of the hill, on which rises the fort of *Monjuich*, all that now remains of the strongholds that encompassed old Barcelona. From this spot, again, other avenues were laid out, intended to complete the circuit of the city at the *Plaza de Cataluña*.

Vast as the new plan of the city might be, it was not out of proportion with the movement of its population. On a fine Sunday afternoon—and the weather here was always fine, and every day seemed Sunday—the whole town poured itself out in long streams into these interminable avenues; and the throng was so dense that one would say that not the town only, but the whole province, with its 1,500,000 of well-to-do agriculturists and manufacturers,

had met here for the celebration of some extraordinary national holiday.

There was something depressing in the transition from the bustle and glitter of Barcelona to the life-in-death dulness and squalor of Tarragona. The latter town has by far the more charming and commanding situation. Like Toledo, like Cordova, like Granada, Tarragona bears evidence of the superior judgment and taste of Phœnicians, Romans, Moors, and other ancient people in their choice of the spots for their great centres of population. But towns have their deaths as well as their births, and mere upstarts like Barcelona, Seville, or Madrid flourish while the older capitals crumble away in still desolation as mere spectre cities. In spite of the wide expanse of blue sea on which she sits enthroned, in spite of her fine Gothic cathedral and cloister, of her cyclopic walls and superb Roman remains, Tarragona is the abode of sordid poverty; and if we except the efforts made to give it stateliness by a new esplanade, and by open spaces won here and there on its levelled bastions, the town exhibits few symptoms of real progress, any improvement of its harbour failing to call back a due part of the trade and industry which its northern rival has been absorbing for centuries.

For the demolition and levelling of the bastions, the municipal authorities, probably owing to scarcity

of free workmen, had recourse to convict labour, the sight of the gangs going backwards and forwards in the charge of grim policemen with loaded rifles being among the few sights which enlivened the forlorn thoroughfares. For such vitality as is left to her Tarragona relies on the wealth of her territory, through some of the most flourishing districts of which we passed on our way to Poblet.

We travelled for little more than two hours on the new open road from Tarragona to Lerida, ascending the valley of the Francoli to the station of Espluga, whence a rickety *char-à-bancs*, drawn by three lean nags, took us to the Monastery. We traversed a district where, as in other parts of Catalonia, the population relies for its well-being as much on its agricultural as on its manufacturing exertions. From the midst of the fields strewn with the sheaves of an abundant harvest, rose the factory chimneys crowning every town and village of the plain, their smoke hardly leaving any trace in the elastic atmosphere where it is absorbed and diffused in purest ether. The hills, as the valley narrowed before us, were clad with vineyards, laid out in terraces up to their summits, the very rocks and ravines being made to yield their fruit by that same stubborn mountain energy which challenges men's admiration as they travel along the Riviera of Genoa or the shores of Lake Leman.

Without neglecting the lowlands, the Catalan, like the Ligurian, clings to the hill-side ; his activity grows with the demand a niggardly nature puts on his thrift and contempt of danger ; and those few square feet of stony soil upon precipices have so great a value in his estimation that no extent of broad acres in the fattest of the flat land would tempt him to part with the freehold which belonged to his father and to many of his forefathers before him.

The Monastery of Poblet might have made a stronger impression on our minds had we not been so recently visitors to the rival establishments of the Stone Monastery in Aragon, and Monserrat in Catalonia.

Poblet was a religious house, belonging to the Benedictine order, which rose in the remote Middle Ages, 1149, found favour with the Aragonese Kings who reared their palace among the monks' cells, buried their dead close to the monks' cemetery, and by the riches and privileges with which they endowed this great pile—the precursor of the Escorial—so stimulated the monks' worldly greed and pride as to raise them into a kind of monastic caste, admitting none but scions of the highest aristocracy among their brethren, and exercising more than feudal sway over the peasantry within their extensive domains.

As champions of the Throne these servants of the altar were looked upon, probably not without good

reason, as reactionary politicians, and in the war for the succession following upon the death of Ferdinand VII., they became unpopular as arrant Carlists in a province which had almost unanimously "pronounced" for the Constitutional Queen.

Upon the suppression of monastic institutions being voted by the Cortes under the influence of Mendizabal, in 1835, Poblet was invaded by a peasant mob from the neighbouring town of Bimbodi or Vimbodi, who, acting upon John Knox's old maxim, drove the crows from their nest and set fire to it, to provide against the contingency of their return.

The library, the archives, and whatever else was combustible, perished in the flames, and of what remained the men of that rural district made havoc in subsequent incursions, the main object of which was to plunder and to unbury hidden treasure, but the result of which, in the disappointment of their thirst for gold, was the wanton disfigurement of all that was beautiful and a partial demolition of all that was standing.

What escaped the ravagers' fury up to the time at which the Government took the desecrated sanctuary under its protection still deserves a visit, though it will not perhaps awaken in every heart the enthusiasm with which recent writers of books of Spanish travels have endeavoured to invest the subject.

Poblet lies in the plain, but close to a gap from which the Francoli flows from its glen in the Sierra de Almenar. It has a rich soil and a great wealth of water around it. But there is hardly any trace of the monks' garden, park, or wood, if any ever existed, and the wretched scrubby avenue that leads to the main entrance is evidently of recent plantation. The vast pile of building rises naked in the sun like the Tombs in the Appian Way, without a shrub or a thread of ivy or other creeper to relieve its glaring whiteness.

The church and some parts of the monastery—the chapter-house and conference-hall, the library, the kitchen and cellars, and especially the cloister, as well as the Palace of King Martin the Humble—are fine specimens of pure and severe Gothic, and some of them are still in a tolerable state of preservation, the rage of the destroyer either having been baffled by the solidity of the masonry or turned with especial malice against the furniture and decoration of the sumptuous royal residence and the gold and marble of the Kings' and Abbots' tombs.

A few of the fragments lying in one of the chapels, and others deposited in the Museum of Tarragona (whither the unburied remains of King James II., "the Conqueror," were removed, and re-interred in the cathedral), bear witness to the skill of the artists, especially the sculptors, and to the refinement of the monks

who commanded their services. Many of the buildings had, however, suffered grievously from the improvements of later date and under the influence of a corrupt taste, so that modernised Poblet would have lost much of the charm of its primitive style had it been left untouched, while as a ruin, it lacks much of the solemnity, of the picturesque gloom and repose, by which remnants of infinitely lesser pretension are haunted and hallowed.

Altogether, I confess that what I had read about the place had awakened expectations that could hardly fail to lead to disappointment.

It is not enough for a monastery—to interest us—that it is a ruin. It should have its deep shades, its owls, and the possibility of its ghost. Staring and glaring as it is, all white and dusty in the daylight, Poblet lacks that venerable look of gloom and desolation which should invest the memory of claustral life, together with all else that belongs to a remote and irrevocable past.

CHAPTER XV.

MADRID TO LA GRANJA.

Heat in Madrid—The Court of La Granja—La Granja—Journey to it
—The Sierra—The ascent—The mountain pass—The aspect of
the country—The descent—The pine-forest—The seven turnings
—An accident to King Alfonso.

THE heat in Madrid, between mid-June and mid-September, is apt to become oppressive. We were now in those *tres meses de infierno*, which follow the *nuove meses de invierno*. There was no need of consulting the glass as to the degree the mercury might reach in the sun or shade. From my fourth-floor window of the Hotel de Paris, in the Puerta del Sol, I could see the steam rising in the long vista up the Calle Mayor and Calle del Arenal. The crowd below panted as they swarmed in the din and roar of that more than Neapolitan chaos of voices, hoofs, and wheels. The summer was waxing intolerable. Evening and morning trains left the city with their loads of fugitives. None were left behind except the myriads of nobodies—

unless one counted for somebodies the lonely widowed King and his Cabinet Ministers, who lingered to wind up State matters and dismiss the Cortes, before they also were allowed to pack up their writing-desks, and set out for a breath of fresh air at La Granja de St. Ildefonso.

“Why should we not also be off to La Granja?”
I said; and off we were.

La Granja, as the reader knows, is a royal summer residence of the Spanish family, up in the Guadarrama Mountains, 3,800 feet above the level of the sea, 1,470 feet above the altitude of Madrid, and higher by 30 feet than the top of Vesuvius.

A royal castle in the air!

The spot on which the castle rises was bought from the monks of El Parral of Segovia (who owned the lands for scores of miles round, and had here their *Grange*), by Philip V., the Bourbon Prince, who undertook to perpetuate the Hapsburg dynasty in Spain, as heir of his grandmother, Maria Theresa, wife of the “Grand Monarque,” and by the will and testament of Charles II., the last male of the Hispano-Austrian line.

Philip V. built here a palace, and laid out gardens in imitation of Versailles, employing his time from 1719 to 1746 with such disregard of the cost that the gardens alone caused an outlay of 45,000,000 of piastres (£9,000,000). In return for this enormous

expense the King had, as he was heard to say, "his quarter-of-an-hour's amusement," and the satisfaction of boasting a royal habitation higher up in the air, and nearer Heaven, than any other sovereign in Europe. The attraction for those who are not of royal blood, and who own neither house nor land in this place, lies in the fact that while in Madrid the heat is at 83 degrees in the shade, it only attains 68 degrees at La Granja.

One leaves Madrid by the northern train at 7.50 in the morning, and travels by rail, 38 kilomètres, to the station at Villalba, which is reached at 9.35. Here the travellers alight, and find themselves at the foot of the Sierra de Guadarrama, a long mountain chain, constituting, with its continuation of Sierra de Gredos, Sierra de Gata, and Sierra de Estrella, on the west, and Sierra de Moncayo and Sierra de Almenar, on the east, the second great mountain wall of the Peninsula, south of the Pyrenean chain, and parallel to it.

Between Villalba and La Granja there run in the summer several lines of stage-coaches or *diligences*, tolerably well served, which accomplish the journey of five leagues in as many hours. The King, in his light carriage and by frequent change of his good cattle, is driven over the distance in less than half the time.

The road winds up a weary ascent to the *Puerto* or Pass of Nava-Cerrada, the highest in the chain, crossing it between two great mountain masses, the height of the *Siete Picos*, or Seven Tops, on the left, and on the right that of Peñalara, the culminating point of the whole crest, rising 8,500 feet above the sea level—the same altitude as that of the Gran Sasso d' Italia in the Abruzzi, the loftiest of the Apennines.

These are the giants of the snowy Guadarrama ridge, which limits the horizon of Madrid on the north, relieving the dreariness of its landscape, and supplying the waters which, collected towards the latter part of the reign of Isabella II. in the Lozoya Canal, strive to lay the dust of its streets and to freshen the verdure of its stunted avenues.

. The Pass of Nava-Cerrada, owing to its great height and the frequent obstruction of the snows, is impracticable in the winter months, and a journey to La Granja at that season can only be accomplished by going roundabout, westwards, to the much lower Pass of Guadarrama, on the road from Madrid to Valladolid, leaving that road soon after crossing the Pass, and taking the right turning to Segovia, whence an easy drive of two leagues leads to La Granja.

The scenery on the ascent to Nava-Cerrada has the usual character of bleakness and savageness peculiar to the whole central region of Spain. We leave in our

rear a wide expanse of undulating table-land, strewn here and there with huge boulders, and traversed in all directions by massive rocks stripped of all vegetation; a dull sameness of gray or tawny soil, on which the pale, dry stubble of the thin crops is scarcely perceptible, the whole bare and arid, wind-blown and dusty, suggesting the idea of a vast charnel-house of scattered skeletons from which every vestige of the flesh had wasted away. In the distance, to the west, the view is closed by the maze of the mountains of Avila, the very head-quarters of earthly desolation; in front is the Sierra, rising like a wall to bar the way, and encompassing with its skirts a high valley, across which, on a rocky bluff on the left, looms the gray pile of the Escorial, the only spot which seemed, even to the brooding mind of Philip II., gloomy enough for a sepulchre, and on which he reared his "eighth wonder of the world" for a monument. The station of the Escorial lies at thirteen kilomètres' distance on the Northern Railway line beyond Villalba; and the carriage road from the royal seat of San Lorenzo of the Escorial to the royal seat of San Ildefonso at La Granja joins the route from Villalba not far from the Pass.

The nakedness of the land as one proceeds is tempered by some thin fringes of verdure in the hollows, some ragged clusters of struggling evergreen oak, with

some meagre and mangy patches of thirsty corn sullenly ripening near the lonely cottages. Matters slowly improve as one nears Nava-Cerrada, a village in a plot of level ground shut up all round by the hills, as the name implies, with the evidence of vegetation, habitation, and well-being in its surroundings, and enjoying a position somewhat analogous to that of the Urseren Thal on the top of the valley of the Reuss on the old St. Gothard road. Outside the village is the *portazgo*, or toll-house, and beyond it a deep ascent leading to the *puerto* and the solitary hut at the summit of the Pass.

We are now 6,000 feet above the level of the sea, the average height of most Alpine passes. Here the mountain ridge marks the boundary between New and Old Castile. The waters we have left behind were the affluents of the Tagus; those that follow us on our course will mix in the channels of the Douro.

There is no breath of wind on the top, and the sun shines in all its glory on the unsheltered road. Here and there in the glens on the southern side we had left a few stray clusters of the stone pine; but on the northern side, a few minutes after leaving the summit, we plunge at once into the great *pinar*, or pine forest, the thickly-growing trunks of the trees and their sprawling branches shading the road on either

side, cheering us with the sight of green herbage and with the murmur of living waters all along our progress.

The road dives down a steep precipice, along seven zigzag turnings, called the Siete Revueltas, winding at abrupt angles from left to right and from right to left—the cattle seeming to increase their speed in proportion to their jaded condition, impelled by the weight of their vehicle to a neck-or-nothing desperate race—somewhat of a trial for the traveller's nerves, especially as the driver insists on undertaking the descent with his whole team, instead of discharging the leaders and trusting to his span of stout wheelers, as coachmen do in civilised countries, with the prudence of seamen taking in sails in a gale of wind.

It was on his way down this perilous slope that King Alfonso met this same year, 1879, the accident which so nearly proved fatal.

The King was on his way back to La Granja, from the Escorial, where, on August 6th, he had buried his beloved sister, Doña Maria del Pilar, whose body had been removed from her death-bed at the baths of Escoriaza, in the north. He was travelling in a light *char-à-bancs* with his elder sister, the Princess of Asturias, the two surviving young Infantas, and the suite—altogether fifteen persons seated behind him. Something went wrong with one of the axle-trees

soon after leaving the Escorial ; the carriage was stopped, and the breakage was repaired, so as to make, as it was believed, everything safe, though it was deemed advisable to abate the usual fearful speed.

On going round the last but one of the seven turnings, one of the hind wheels flew off, the carriage broke down, and those seated on the foremost bank—the King, General Echague, Commander of the Halberdier Guard, and others, were thrown in a heap on the ground.

The postillion who had charge of the leaders, with a happy presence of mind, turned sharp to the right towards the hill, and stopped thus the headlong course of the carriage, which would otherwise have been wholly overturned, and thrown down the precipice on the left. It was fortunate, also, that the King in this instance had dispensed with the usual escort of his mounted cuirassiers ; for, had a score of heavy horsemen been galloping close after the carriage, as they have to do on ordinary State occasions, it would have been impossible for them to pull up in time, and avoid treading on the bodies of the prostrate King and his fellow-sufferers.

When the crash was over, and the cloud of dust had cleared, it was found that the King lay on the ground, with his right shoulder dislocated, and half-smothered by the weight of the Marchioness of

Superunda, the lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Asturias, a very bulky person, whose dress was torn to tatters by the violence of her fall. General Echague had also his right shoulder dislocated. The King's face was bleeding, it was not at first clear whether from the mouth or the nose.

Two doctors—the Marques of San Gregorio and Señor Alonso—were in the carriage with the King; they had neither medicines nor instruments about them, but, with the aid of the bystanders and the scarfs of some of the mounted foresters of the suite, they bandaged the arms and shoulders of the sufferers, and a messenger was sent on to La Granja for fresh conveyances.

The royal party was expected to reach this place at one or half-past one in the afternoon. Long before the time the garden square in front of the palace was crowded by the Court and people, all anxious to show, by their respectful welcome, sympathy with their Sovereign for the recent family bereavement. The messenger galloped up to the royal mews, gave a short account of the accident, and forthwith some of the royal travelling-carriages and stage-coaches which happened to be at hand were hastening to the scene of the mishap. About one hour later—half-past two—the carriages came back, the King and General Echague in the first, with closed windows, and, in the next,

the Princess and the two Infantas, who had suffered no hurt, and seemed to have withstood the shock and the alarm with good courage.

The King alighted in the vestibule of the palace, pale in the face, and with hair somewhat ruffled, but calm and even cheerful, waving back the multitude which made way for him, and begging all "not to touch him." General Echague, who was removed to the Halberdier Barracks, and who, as an old man, above sixty, had fallen more heavily, and suffered more intensely, allowed some cries of anguish to escape him. A few minutes afterwards, the doctors having newly bandaged the dislocated shoulder, the King showed himself to the persons assembled in the antechambers, reassuring everybody, saying he had only sustained a "trifling hurt." He took some hot broth, and withdrew to his inner apartments, where he was advised to lie down.

People have commented in no measured terms on the imprudence of the King in travelling about in a light carriage, totally unfit for these rough mountain roads, on his juvenile ardour for neck-or-nothing locomotion, where there was no pressing occasion for such mad speed, and especially on the whole staff of equerries, inspectors, grooms, and stablemen, who allowed the royal family to risk their necks in a rickety rattletrap, without proper examination and

attention, their negligence being the more inexcusable and inexplicable as one of the wheels of the *char-à-bancs* had already given way not long before, and the vehicle had been sent to a coachbuilder in Segovia for repair.

CHAPTER XVI.

LA GRANJA.

The Palace—Its founder and its royal inmates—The garden and grounds—The waterworks—The surrounding scenery—The charms of the place as a summer residence—Its comforts and luxuries—Its historical and artistic curiosities—A masterpiece of art neglected and going to ruin.

THE Palace of La Granja is a big mass of buildings with its front facing the garden, and bearing some resemblance to that of Versailles. Its back is turned upon a square, also laid out in lawn and shrubs, round which cluster some hundreds of houses, ranged in two or three streets, and constituting the little town or village in its immediate dependency. The palace in its rear throws out two pavilions, on the right and left, and has in its centre the chapel, the whole, on this side, surmounted by a cluster of those quaint square *Seicento* turrets with round zinc domes or balls, and vanes and crosses at the tops, the like of which are a familiar and not an unpleasant sight in many of the old streets in Madrid.

For the rest, there is nothing particular in the architecture of this royal abode on the outside, and but little that may be called elegant, or very sumptuous, in the interminable apartments within.

The state suite, which dates from the reign of the founder (1701-1746), was got up on his recollections of the showy magnificence he had left behind in his grandfather's court. The objects of art on its walls are mere copies of masterpieces long ago removed to the Madrid Gallery, with the exception of a few scores of sketches by the hand of Philip's wife, Elizabeth Farnese, painted in such leisure hours as were left her in the midst of the intrigues by which she and her wily, low-born counsellor, the Gardener-Cardinal Alberoni, contrived to secure three crowns for as many of her sons.

The garden, spreading over an extent of land ten times as large as the space occupied by the palace, its premises, and the straggling town, sweeps upwards to the mountain by a gentle ascent, till its verdure reaches, at a considerable height, and apparently blends with, the vast dark pine forest mantling the rugged sides of the Sierra.

The grounds were originally laid out on the plan of those of Versailles; some of the avenues are still running up in straight lines and at right angles; and there are fountains and statues, arches and temples,

waterfalls, water-spouts—some of these 200 feet high—and water everywhere—in lakelets and streamlets, in baths and grottoes and arbours—water sufficient to supply Versailles, Hampton Court and Chatsworth joined in one, with the additional charm of an unrivalled site refusing itself to a uniformity which upon a more level surface would become monotonous and tedious.

In the centre of the grounds there is a culminating point, called the Plazuela de las Ocho Calles, from which one looks round on eight shady alleys, and on sixteen fountains, eight at the angles of the octagonal place, and as many in the distance, at the end of each of the eight avenues.

The sculpture groups, the arcades, the endless ornaments dotting the ground at every step, are not as remarkable for soberness and correctness of taste as for elegance of style; and though we hear that millions have been sunk in their structure, we should wonder whether any sum could have supplied the mere material, were we not told that much of what seems marble is only plaster, and much or all of the bronze and gold simply varnished cast iron.

For the mere names by which these trumpery toys are distinguished, all the deities and legends of the ancient mythology had to be ransacked. One passes from the fountain of Neptune to that of Amphitrite,

from that of Apollo to that of the Three Graces, from Diana's Bath to Pomona's grove, or Eolus's Cave ; and there are, besides, a dragons' tountain, a lions', a griffins', and a frogs' fountain, with wyverns and hippogriffs and crocodiles, and a bewildering herd of other non-descript hideous monsters never conjured up even by Ariosto's fancy.

But the glory of all these sights is eclipsed by the splendour of the waterfalls—the Horse-racing Fall, the Broad Fall, the New Fall, and especially the Grand Central Fall, this last-named rushing down in seven successive high leaps, supplied by an immense reservoir, which is called “El Mar,” and which in any other less hyperbolical language than Spanish would deserve the name of a lovely and most picturesque lake.

These waterworks, unrivalled by anything in nature except Niagara, and contrived with a skill nowhere equalled, constitute for the multitude the main attraction to the spot, and are exhibited for their benefit ; some of the fountains play every Sunday when the Court is here, and all of them on certain festivities, as on St. Christina's day, July 24th, and St. Louis's, August 25th—Court or no Court.

The real merit of the spot however, lies not in the King's palace and its fittings, or in the garden and its ornaments, nor does the charm of a residence here

depend on the radiancy of the royal presence. Indeed, Philip V. would better have deserved our thanks had he left the place alone—a mere chase with a hunting-lodge, as it was for centuries under the old kings of Castile—provided he had only protected the woods from the destruction which has laid waste the whole extent of the surrounding mountain region.

The palace is built high on the slope of one of the fair rounded hills which stand as buttresses to the grand rugged chain, and which, clad with primæval pine-woods up to the summits, bear a resemblance to some of the deepest recesses of the Black Forest around Baden-Baden. In the rear of the woods rises the crest of Peñalara, a gray mass of rock on which, even in mid-July or August, patches of snow are lingering, and from which flow the rills that insure to this royal oasis its perpetual verdure. On three sides, the mountains encircle the royal domains ; on the fourth, the northern side, the view opens on the boundless plain of Old Castile, with the tower of Segovia's magnificent cathedral rising in the middle, at the end of a six miles' wooded avenue.

Round the castle and garden the land slopes with a gentle declivity, and it bears a thin, young, sparse, brushwood of oak, elm, horse-chestnut, acacia, etc., allowed to run wild as a chase, and crossed by straight

shady avenues and winding bridle-paths, many of them following the course of rambling, tumbling, brawling trout-streams.

The forest trees in these lower grounds are not allowed to reach their full growth, nor do the mountains around enjoy as free an immunity from the murderous axe as heart might wish. Nay, the thirst for such gain as can be made out of timber is so great that enormous cart-loads of it drawn by oxen are day and night encumbering the thoroughfares north and south of the Sierra.

I am told that the King himself makes yearly a revenue of 72,000 duros (£14,400) out of his timber-yard alone.

In spite of this however there is not in Spain, and I am not sure there is anywhere else in the world, a more charming spot than La Granja, where a man sick of the world may better while away his summer months.

In the first place, though so near a large capital, it is wondrously quiet and solitary; for Queen Isabella, with correct though selfish judgment, never allowed a railway to run through or even near it, and in the Court's absence a man may chance to be, as I was, the sole guest at the *Hotel Europeo* week after week.

In the garden close at hand outside the palace, he can range freely over the grounds as if they had been laid out and were entertained for his exclusive enjoy-

ment and at other people's expense. He finds rustic seats in sylvan recesses and along murmuring streams where not a ray even of the noontide sun can reach him; where he can take his book to the lake-side and read and muse, and gaze at a mass of deep verdure, at a picture of forest, rock, and snow, leaving him little to envy the cockney-haunted show places in the Alps or Pyrenees. He can sit and muse, and be blessed, while he inhales the keen, cool, elastic mountain air, and watches the evanescent tints that follow the evening sun in its setting, and thinks with sympathy, not unmixed with satisfaction, of the thousands of wretches stewing and broiling in the heat of the city only twelve and a half leagues off, broiling in the Sun's Gate by day, and stifling in the playhouse or poring over *trente et quarante* at their clubs at night.

And outside the palace precincts he has walks and rides and drives to old Segovia and its aqueduct, to the deer-park of Rio Frio, built at an enormous cost by Elizabeth Farnese, who intended it as her jointure house in her widowhood, but where neither she nor anybody after her ever resided; to *Quita Pesares*, or "Care Soother," a country seat of the late Queen Regent, Christina, who knew how to make hay while the sun shone—a knowledge, by-the-way, inherited by some of the military rulers who came after her in the *interregnum*; as, for instance, by

Marshal Serrano, who had cleverness enough to buy land and build a fine house at revolution prices, and to claim heavy indemnity for the property when it had to be given up at the Restoration, thus managing to enrich himself both by the purchase and the sale.

A stranger may amuse himself, if he is at all interested about the historical associations clinging to old places, by picturing to himself in imagination the builder of the palace, Philip V., in a fit of sadness and weariness of the world, throwing up the reins of government, and abdicating his crown in favour of his eldest son, Louis (January, 1724), and, as usual, soon repenting his rash resolution; and, upon the providential death of Louis, only a few months later, resuming the supreme power, urged by the restless ambition of his Farnesian wife. Philip went thus through the phases of that domestic drama, which was to be rehearsed only six years later, in 1730, at Turin, by Victor Amadeus II.—so true it is that history often does repeat itself, and that men placed in the same circumstances will easily be swayed to the same course.

La Granja was, after the lapse of 100 years, in 1832, the scene of those family broils and manoeuvres by which old Ferdinand VII., in a variety of his dying moods, was made again and again to alter his dispositions as to the dynastic succession, leaving

in the end the matter to be settled by a five years' civil war—a complaint which became chronic in Spain.

Here are the chambers and closets where the Queen Consort, Christina, coaxed, and the Infantas worried and bullied, the old reprobate Monarch, swaying his mind to and fro; here the very room where one of the Princesses, the Infanta Carlota, boxed the ears of the ambidextrous, treacherous, chief schemer, Calomarde; and here the very table on which that same Christina, after triumphing over Don Carlos, had, four years later, 1836, to sign the abdication of the Regency, the rough hand of the rude Sergeant Garcia guiding her trembling fingers over the paper.

For people curious about embroidered vestments, and golden crosses and chalices, and richly-jewelled monstrances, there is the King's Chapel, or Collegiate Church, served by twelve canons and an abbot, who show with great glee the treasure of their vestry; still, thanks to their foresight, miraculously safe and inviolate, through the whole era of French invasions and domestic convulsions.

Among these hallowed relics are the walking-stick of Elizabeth of Thuringia and Hungary, the heroine of "The Saint's Tragedy," and the camp-altar, a painted triptych, which the Emperor Charles V. carried with him throughout his incessant campaigns.

A far more interesting, because less known, and, indeed, utterly unknown, treasure of olden times, lies outside in the garden, under a boat-shed or tool-house, near the shore of the "Mar," or Great Lake, where it has long been rotting unheeded.

This is a large state-boat, or gondola, or Bucentaur, finely and magnificently carved and gilt, evidently a present of the Venetian Republic to an Emperor—in all probability Charles V.—as it bears the Imperial shield with the Eagle on the prow, and the Winged Lion of St. Mark, Venice's cognisance, astern.

The guide-books make no mention of this boat; the scholars and antiquarians among the canons of the Collegiate Church know nothing about it, and only "believe that the big boat came hither from Naples when Charles III. exchanged the throne of the Two Sicilies for that of Spain," and laid it in its present boat-house, intended, probably, to be used for royal sport, and since forgotten. It, luckily, awakened the interest of King Amadeus, an Italian, fit to appreciate the worth of its exquisite workmanship, who ordered it to be carefully treasured up, repaired, and regilt—an order which was, of course, disregarded after that Sovereign's abdication.

The barge is still, on the whole, marvellously well preserved, the good timber defying three centuries of oblivion and neglect. The carvings, which cover

the whole surface of the boat and its canopy—a series of bas-reliefs with groups of quaint faces and grotesque figures which it would take many hours to decipher—belong to the Golden Age of Italian art; and all the details of its ornaments are in the very best taste. Though only faint traces of the gilding remain, and some of the outer decorations have been broken off, nothing would be easier than to restore the beautiful relic to its pristine splendour, provided more skilful hands were set to work than those which King Amadeus had in his service.

But even without any attempt at restoration, even merely as a wreck, such as it is now, the Imperial Bucentaur should not be allowed to remain where it is. It would be, as a work of art, as well as a specimen of Mediæval boat-building, an article worthy of a distinct place in a museum; and as I truly believe that never a word was ever spoken or written about it, I should be most happy were this brief statement of its existence and of its whereabouts to call to it the attention of persons sufficiently earnest in their worship of art to take pity upon this masterpiece, and powerful as well as energetic enough to move heaven and earth to its rescue.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE COURT AT LA GRANJA.

Experiences of the Spanish Court—The King's style of travelling—Economies of King Amadeo—Impracticable under Alfonso XII.—The Spanish and Italian Civil List—Burdens on the Spanish Civil List—Court dignitaries and officials—Spanish nobility—Royal travelling retinue—Courtly influence on the Sovereign—The Spanish generals—Danger of militarism.

WHENEVER the King of Spain travels from Madrid to his country seat of La Granja de San Ildefonso, a battalion of infantry and a battery are sent as a garrison to occupy the barracks of the palace. A company of halberdier guards is stationed at all the doors and gates. An escort of cuirassiers are *échelonnés* all along the line of the royal progress; they are all mounted and drawn up on the road-side, at different posts, as the royal equipage runs past at full trot or gallop; they race before, behind, beside, and after it, up-hill, down-hill, to the imminent risk of their necks; and as the King draws near the iron gates on the square before the palace, a salvo of

twenty-one cannon is fired from the battery arrayed on the green under the main avenue.

A vast number of attendants upon the royal persons, ministers, courtiers, and domestics of all ranks are either already in waiting, or follow close upon the King's arrival.

There are some good people who grumble at all this needless noise and display. But I remember either these same people, or others like them, who used to sneer at King Amadeo and at his *bourgeois* habit of driving out with only two horses to his phaeton, and one single attendant by his side; and were disposed to quarrel with him for that simplicity which they ascribed to niggardliness. They murmured that he was making himself "too cheap;" that "the Spaniards, a people puffed up with pride in everything, must above all things have a King they may be proud of," and they drew disparaging comparisons between the meanness of the "beggarly Savoyard" and the splendour of their Queen Isabella, who never went out without a suite of coaches and six, being, with all her faults, "muy Reina y muy Española" (a thorough-bred Spaniard and every inch a queen).

Poor Amadeo bethought himself of the finances of the kingdom, shattered by many years of monarchic extravagance and by a few months of democratic recklessness; he was impressed with the necessity of

retrenchment, and gave the example of prudent thrift and self-denial in his own expenditure.

King Alfonso XII. coming to the throne after Amadeo's abdication and at the close of an interregnum distracted by anarchy and civil war, was also well advised to usher in an era of wise economy; but as it happens in all restorations, he had many faithful friends and followers of the dynasty to requite; many of the old customs, pomps, and pageantries of the Court to revive; he had to outbalance himself to some extent on the occurrence of the royal wedding, the ceremonies of which had only too soon to be gone through again; and the Spanish people, burdened with taxes to a tremendous amount, and at a loss how to meet the collector's demands, owing to a variety of agricultural calamities and commercial distress, seemed disposed to put their pride in their pocket, and to wish that their King were a little more like the Italian intruder, and abated a little, or a great deal, of that royal splendour and magnificence which seemed hardly in keeping with the condition of his suffering subjects.

King Alfonso XII. came to the throne with the best intentions and was for four years under the influence of the most prudent councillors. His Civil List, appointed on that of King Amadeo, was fixed at 37,000,000 reals, or 9,500,000 francs (about £370,000),

considerably less than that of his mother, Isabella II., which exceeded 40,000,000 reals, and much less than the allowance made by the Italian Parliament to King Humbert, which amounts to 14,250,000 francs. The Spanish Civil List, however, bears as large a proportion to the Spanish budget, where the ordinary expenditure is estimated at 806,590,940 francs, as the Italian Civil List to the Italian expenditure of 1,398,607,755 francs. Moreover, the King of Italy, beside the appanage assigned to the members of the royal family, is burdened with the maintenance of the palaces, parks, etc., of the various States out of the ruins of which his kingdom was made. King Alfonso has also the charge of the pensions granted to his mother and father, Queen Isabella and King Francisco de Assis (1,000,000 reals, or about £100,000 each), besides the appanages to his aunt the Duchess of Montpensier, and to several of the large tribe of royal Infants of both sexes.

But much of the expenditure which weighed on the Civil List in his mother's reign, such as the keeping of the Alhambra at Granada, and other monumental ruins at Cordova, Seville, etc., has now devolved on the State, and the cost of the royal mansions in town and country cannot be very ruinous, seeing that the pine woods alone at this royal seat of La Granja de San Ildefonso yield timber to the yearly amount of 72,000 duros, or 1,440,000 reals

(£14,000), sufficient to defray the expenses both of this and other royal country residences.

One of the grievances of the Spanish people concerning the Civil List is that the sums allowed to Isabella and her consort are spent out of the country, the alternative being to put up with the presence of those two royal personages in the country, as the ex-Queen shows an insuperable reluctance to settle anywhere in Spain out of Madrid, and her permanent residence in the capital would be fraught with even more invincible political objections on the part of the young King and his Government.

Offence is also taken to the fact, which would seem very natural anywhere else, that the Civil List is exempt from the reduction of 15 per cent. which falls on all other civil salaries of the State, the same privilege being only extended to the officers of the Army and Navy in actual campaigning or cruising service.

The people here, in short, contend that the reduction of the Civil List is only apparent, and that King Alfonso's Court is kept up to the same standard of lavish extravagance as was that of his most reckless predecessor.

As we have seen, however, the claims of devoted partisans on a restored dynasty are not easily to be set aside, and King Alfonso, had he even been a free agent,

would have found it hard to rid himself of many of his mother's courtiers, who basked in the light of her favour in prosperous times and put up with obscurity and privations when her star had set. The King's Court is certainly very grand and splendid, and must needs cause considerable outlay ; but it must be allowed that it has been so organised as to lay much of the weight of its service on high-born and wealthy grandees who accept honour for their pay, reducing the salaried officials to as moderate proportions as the Spaniards' love of pomp and circumstance would allow.

The Marquis of Alcañices, for instance, better known abroad by his Neapolitan title of Duke of Sexto, accumulates the charges of Majordomo-in-Chief, Grand Equerry and Huntsman, Keeper of His Majesty's Seals, General Commander of the Royal Halberdiers, and General Intendente, or High Steward of the Royal Household and Patrimony, etc.

He is a rich nobleman, and his appointments are in all probability simply honorary, and the same may be supposed to be the case with the Great Almoner, the first huntsman, and other officials of the highest rank. But under all of them are secretaries and subordinate clerks and attendants ; five to the Majordomo's office, five equeries, six kings-at-arms, a secretary of the *estampilla*, or signet, a general secretary of the Intendente, with two chiefs of sections and five

chiefs of departments, a cashier, a chief architect, a head librarian, an archivist, a general *consultor*, a general director of the royal riding-houses with a secretary, a general director of the royal works, a general inspector of the palaces, the King's private secretary, with two clerks, five physicians, a chief apothecary, or first pharmacist, with a whole host of subordinates, appointed with so great a profusion that the works at La Granja alone are under the supervision of three chief engineers, besides the General Intendente and the General Inspector.

That all or most of these receive salaries is not to be doubted, and it is to be hoped that their services are more handsomely remunerated than those of the mere menials and hard-working labourers; for I have been assured that, for instance, the men employed as common gardeners here at La Granja receive a daily pay of 4 to 6 reals, 10*d.* to 15*d.*, and the *capataz* or foreman of the nursery grounds, a very intelligent botanist, only gets 10 reals, or about 2*s.* a day, a sum which could never enable him to keep his wife and family of six children, did he not eke out his scanty income by odd jobs in the gardens of some of the gentry in the neighbourhood.

The salaried attendants and servants of the Court, however, are hardly as obnoxious as the great noblemen and gentlemen crowding the antechambers, and per-

forming actual or nominal menial services, for which they either receive very small honoraries or none at all.

The number of the titled nobility of Spain was at all times quite formidable, and very large additions to it have been made by the so-called Democratic Cabinets which undertook to dispense the copious waters of the fountain of honour under King Amadeus, and still more during the four years of the present reign.

There are now 89 Spanish dukes, all *grandees* of the first rank ; 831 marquises, 632 counts, 92 viscounts, and 25 barons, making altogether a host of 1,659 heads of noble families.

Room for many of these is made among the 61 Majordomos in weekly attendance, the 44 *gentiles hombres de casa y boca*, and the 592 *gentiles hombres de Camara, de entrada, en el interior*, etc., some of them in actual service, others superannuated, or promoted to various offices in the State, incompatible with their Court appointments, but kept on the books as entitled to resume their duties at the Palace upon being relieved from other employment.

Among the Court servants receiving salaries are 11 *Monteros de Camara*, hereditary chamberlains, one of whom takes his turn watching the whole night at the door of the King's sleeping apartment. These

must all be natives of Espinosa, a small town in the north of Castile, on the road between Vitoria and Santander, the original privilege having been granted in 1113 to Sancho Montero, a native of that place, in return for the heroism with which he saved the life of the Conde Sancho, one of the princely heroes who worked at the recovery of the Castilian territory from the Moors.

The town is called Espinosa de los Monteros to this day, and all the married ladies belonging to the place hurry home to it in their expectation of becoming mothers, that the new born, if a boy, may be qualified by his birth for the coveted office.

With a Court mounted on such a footing, no one can be surprised to hear that Queen Isabella on her travels, as, for instance, on her royal progress to the Basque Provinces and the North, in 1855, had as many as 500 attendants, gentlemen, and gentlemen's gentlemen in her suite. And fully as large was the present King's retinue when he left Madrid on his first campaign against the Carlists, in 1875.

But after all it is not so much the attendance of this courtly legion on the Sovereign that the Spanish people seem to grudge, as the influence which some of the highest Court dignitaries are supposed to exercise on His Majesty's mind.

King Alfonso came to the throne a very young

man, and his restoration was effected with a bloodless, but not the less violent *coup d'état*. His youth and the frankness and ingenuousness of his character won him a public favour grounded on correct popular instinct, and he has as yet done nothing to forfeit his subjects' goodwill. No fault whatever is found with him personally, but he is supposed to be too closely watched and too strongly swayed by the courtiers in his immediate surroundings, a *camarilla*, at the head of which is the ubiquitous and indispensable Marquis of Alcañices.

It is owing to the work of this courtly coterie, people here think, that the King's mind was estranged from his late Prime Minister, Canovas Del Castillo, the ablest statesman in Spain, whom the King's courtiers represented as an overbearing despot, taking upon himself the authority that should belong to the monarch alone, sneering at him, and calling him in the King's hearing, "His Majesty Alfonso XIII."

The principle prevailing in real constitutional countries, that there should always be the best harmony between the King's responsible advisers and his personal attendants, and that the head of a Cabinet should, on taking office, be entitled to remove from the royal household such members as he considered resolutely hostile, replacing them by persons devoted to his interests, has never been acted upon in Spain. It was

the camarilla of bishops, monks, and nuns that overthrew Isabella's throne; and the danger of her son is supposed now to lie in the ascendancy the "generals" have won upon him, especially after their final victory over the Carlists, in 1876.

It will be long, perhaps, before Spain may hope to be rid of the baneful influence of militarism.

The Spanish army does not exceed a force of 100,000 men; but it is much larger than would be required by a country at peace with the whole world, and perfectly safe from foreign invasion. Such as it is, however, it burdens the country with a yearly expenditure of 122,000,000 francs, while the Italian military budget, ordinary and extraordinary, is fixed at 195,000,000 francs, with which the Italian Kingdom musters, on the peace-footing, a force of 205,000 men.

The reason why 100,000 Spanish soldiers, who are wretchedly paid, cost so much more than half of the expense entailed by a double force of Italians, lies in the fact that Spain boasts 8 captain-generals, 86 lieutenant-generals, 127 *mariscales de campo*, or generals of division, and 336 brigadiers, without reckoning 6 generals of division and 56 brigadiers on half-pay. The general officers in Spain are thus 619, and the officers under them cannot be reckoned at less than 20,000, or about one for every five soldiers. The officers of the Italian army of 205,000, all told, are only 12,269.

It is the multitude of these epauletted gentlemen which lies as one of the heaviest burdens on the shoulders of the Spanish people, and its weight is so far from likely to decrease that 3 of the 8 captain-generals, 30 of the 86 lieutenant-generals, 60 of the 127 major-generals, and 134 of the 336 brigadiers are indebted for their rank to King Alfonso during these four years of his reign. Promotion here is based neither on seniority nor on actual service against a domestic or foreign enemy. It is only too generally matter of personal favour. Narvaez, O'Donnell, Prim, and other soldier statesmen have taught the army to look to *pronunciamiento* or mutiny for rapid advancement.

It used to be said in France when her armies overran Europe that every young conscript could flatter himself he carried a marshal's *bâton* in his knapsack. In Spain there is hardly a stripling of an ensign who may not look forward to a prime minister's portfolio.

There is little hope for Spain even under the best of kings, so long as she has too many courtiers, too many nobles, too many generals, and above all things, too many politicians.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LIFE AT LA GRANJA.

Dryness of the Spanish climate—Its calamitous effects—Emigration of the lower classes—Exodus of the upper orders—Watering-places abroad—Summer resorts at home—Summer at La Granja—The town and the Court—Freshness of the climate—Summer enjoyments—Excursions in the neighbourhood—Lights and shades of Spanish character—Town and country manners—Ease and freedom of rural life.

THE author of the well-known nursery rhyme, "Rain, rain, go to Spain; when you're wanted come again," seems to have had a correct knowledge of the ordinary laws and vicissitudes of the atmosphere in the various climates of Europe. There has not been a drop from heaven in Madrid or at the royal seat of La Granja for these last three months. If fine sunshiny weather makes a summer, we have had it—with a vengeance.

But ungrateful mortals will tire of *toujours perdrix*, and in Spain men grumble that the crops, denied all moisture, have been a failure; that oidium, phylloxera, locusts, and more plagues than were known in

Pharaoh's Egypt, have ravaged vineyards, orchards, and olive groves, so as to blight the fairest fruits of the earth. "Too much of a fine summer," they cry, "ye gods!"

There is, indeed, cause for complaint and more for anxiety. Hundreds of thousands of the lustiest labourers are quitting a soil which has only been bathed with the drops of their toil, and with the tears of their half-famished families. To escape from summer heat at Murcia or Almeria by migrating to Oran or Constantine, may seem like falling from the frying-pan into the fire—but it little profits to argue with a starving population, and the exodus of the distressed peasantry must go on, however evident it may be that their departure adds to that great evil of depopulation which has been at the bottom of all the calamities of the country since its formation into a united monarchy under Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholics.

And—sad to say!—while the suffering children of want turn their backs on this stepmotherly peninsula, sailing from the southern ports, the spoilt children of fortune, who could afford to sit at home at ease, are seized with a frantic love of change; and a tide of no less than 40,000 jaded persons—one tithe of the Madrid population—set out in an opposite direction, most of them conveying large sums of money, which is so

sorely wanted for better purposes, anywhere beyond the Pyrenean borders, and chiefly to gladden the hearts of the keepers of hotels, boarding, gambling, and worse houses clustering round the Bay of Biscay, at Biarritz, Bayonne, and the other haunts which between June and October bear the name of "Little Spain."

The emigration of the poor may be determined by necessity; but that of the wealthy is mere matter of fashion. The English have inoculated their neighbours with their touring mania. A change of air they must have, whether for better or worse. Spaniards, like Frenchmen and Italians, must be off to the sea or mountains; and they will only go back to their homes when the English birds of passage show the way.

For my own part, I was, for this summer of 1879, determined to abide where I was—in the centre of Spain. A vast extent of this peninsula is certainly deficient in those natural beauties of landscape which constitute the peculiar charm of "the sweet South." Still in Spain also there is much to admire and to cherish; and waste and desolate as vast tracts of it are at all times of the year, everything in them looks to the best advantage in that summer season of which both natives and strangers evince so great a horror. Even Spanish towns—even dreary Madrid—rise

sufficiently high above the sea level, to be not only habitable, but fresh and healthy, however irksome, all the year round. But away from it, both along the Atlantic coast, and on the snowy mountain-ridges, it ought to be surely possible to find as much coolness as in the crowded hotels of French, Swiss, and other watering-places.

And even without travelling farther from Madrid than the thirteen leagues which separate the Royal Alcazar in Plaza de Oriente from the royal seat of La Granja, I found it quite easy to live the four hottest months, enjoying all the blessings without any of the drawbacks of the summer heat.

There had been, I repeat, never one drop of rain at La Granja from the beginning of June. Yet the trees in the square at the back of the palace, the shrubs in the pastures of the King's gardens and park, had not one leaf parched or shrunken, and the turf looked as fresh and verdant as it might be on the slopes at Windsor or the flats of Hampton Court.

We were here 3,800 feet above the level of the sea. The mountains all round clad in their primeval pines, had not yet, in mid-August, let down all the snow nestling in the hollows of their deep gorges; the brawling of rushing streams gladdened the ear under the green garden avenues, supplying the luxuries of the score of fountains which royal munificence has

laid out with consummate taste—some of which, like that of La Fama, send up in festive days sparkling spouts rising so many hundred feet in the air, that their rainbow-crowned spray may be seen all across country as far as Segovia, six miles off.

All round, outside the royal domains, are splendid drives shaded by lofty avenues, and fine bridle-paths across wild heaths covered with brushwood, along tumbling trout-streams leading to sylvan spots of Alpine loveliness: to the Boca del Asno, to the Casa de Vacas, to Robledo, to the ruined castle or hunting-lodge of Charles V. at Valsain, with more rugged ways into the heart of the Sierra; to the Reventon, or cleft in the mountains, or to the hoary solitude of the Paular.

What spot on earth could imagination conjure up for a more bracing and invigorating summer abode?

The sun, it is true, was burning fiercely for a few hours of the day away from the shade of the trees, and from the relief of the mountain breeze. But the breeze was seldom failing, and for shade we were nowhere at a loss; and at the rising or setting of the sun the elasticity of the air, its purity, the fragrance of the wild thyme and of the pine foliage with which it was impregnated, had a softness, sweetness, and balminess which the Alps themselves could not surpass.

No dew fell there, yet there was moisture in the air, the comparative length of the night in this southern latitude tempering the parching influence of the day's drought. We had no time for languor or lassitude even in a quiescent state; but if we stirred at all, if we did not give in to lazy habits, we found that exercise even in the hottest hours was invigorating and refreshing. That was, at least, the case with me.

Man is naturally so constituted that he may fight heat with the same weapons as avail him against cold. The peasant in the field, the soldier at drill or parade, the sportsman in pursuit of game can thrive in the noontide glare. Man can toil and moil, and exult in his power of endurance. But here there was no very severe trial. The lounge of the Court and fashionable circle was taken before lunch-time, between eleven and one; little inconvenience being felt from the heat even by the children and nurses playing with hoops and skipping-ropes in the sun on the Palace terrace.

And yet, with all these natural charms, and several scores of fine houses and two country inns—one of which, the Hotel Europeo, is good enough for native statesmen and foreign diplomatists—La Granja is *terra incognita* to most Spaniards, and seems to have no attraction for them. The year I was there it was little better than a desert till the King graced the place with his presence. For my part, I liked it best in its utter

loneliness, when I had it almost all as my own, when hardly anybody was there but a very few of those for whom the only alternative lay between it and Madrid.

When the King is here, La Granja, of course, becomes the Court. It is to Madrid what Therapia is to Constantinople. But even then many of the courtiers, many of those whom duty or business chains to the spot, are panting for Biarritz, and not a few are off to that darling spot whenever failing health or pressing private affairs supply a pretext for their absence.

In the few that remain, it is pleasant to study the peculiarities of Spanish summer life.

We had here the King's cuirassiers, his troops, his halberdier guards, the attendants, honorary and salaried, about the King's person, or those of the Princess of Asturias and the Infantas; some of the Cabinet Ministers, incessantly on and off, and a sprinkling of the Diplomatic Body.

But there were, besides, a few families of the middle and upper classes, owners of houses in the town or lands in the neighbourhood; a few professional men, many canons and priests, and a certain number of deputies, politicians, and journalists out of harness.

The King lived here patriarchally; the gardens were open throughout the day, and even the *parterres* round the Palace, close to its windows, were accessible to all classes of persons with a liberality of which

no private gentleman in his villa would give the example.

Before domestic mourning broke in there was an open theatre, a musical band, and Les Grandes Eaux playing in the afternoon, the King and the ladies of his family taking their pleasure with their subjects, mixing and conversing with the groups seated on the marble benches, upon slight acquaintance, and with unaffected amiability and cordiality.

To all outward seeming, the gathering of the people at La Granja might suggest the idea of a happy family. Democracy has for many years established equality before the law in Spain, and there is nothing in men's or women's apparel, and not much in the way of culture or manners, to mark any distinction of social rank. Yet even here one may discern forces of attraction and repulsion busily at work, and a tendency in birds of a feather to flock together. The latent *morgue*, the exclusive instincts of which royal personages show no trace, are still at work, and unconsciously, as it were, betrayed by some of the titled servants in waiting upon them. Titles are as plenty as blackberries in Spain, and have been made lately as cheap as dirt; but those who bear them, and especially such families as combine with them long ancestral descent and historic names, submit with no good grace to the levelling spirit of the age, bottle up their blue blood in a freezing reserve,

and treat their would-be equals with a galling condescension.

On the other hand, the untitled ones, or those whose titles go no farther back than the reign of Amadeo, men, many of them, who have been in Parliament and even in the Cabinet in revolutionary and republican times, affect a great contempt for aristocratic distinction, loudly express their abhorrence of the Court and its baseness, servility, and corruption; but though they sit apart and sulk and indulge in democratic sneers and disloyal epigrams, they still bask in the sun of royalty, and are on the watch for a nod, for the lifting of a finger to the brim of the hat of a supercilious grandee.

There is, of course, greater dissimulation of antipathy between the men, more urgent necessity for compromise, greater frequency of unceremonious and almost cordial intercourse. But familiarity and even friendship between them do not always in this country imply intimacy or even acquaintance between their families. Women stand their ground with polite determination and ignore each other with easy nonchalance. Where the greatest noblemen and the King himself move about in shooting-jackets and straw hats, the ladies display a finery characterised in the highest rank by simplicity and elegance, among the middle orders by gorgeousness of colours and a profusion

of flounces and furbelows. There the fair ones sit in long rows on the benches, or in clusters on iron-wire chairs, one group scanning another, taking stock of the rival attire, whispering confidential remarks; while the men, all to themselves, flourish their Madrid papers, discuss threadbare politics, watch the King's movements to be ready with their obeisance as he passes, yet breaking out into loud disputes or bursts of noisy merriment without a shadow of restraint.

Thus, between checks on friendly communion and freedom of country habits, La Granja constitutes a very curious kind of watering-place. It is simply Madrid and the Court out of town, the same classes in their usual antagonism, every man known to his neighbours, animated by old likes and dislikes, mindful of precedents, swayed by prejudices, all adapting themselves to this summer season as to a brief truce in the battle of life, a short respite in the daily career of petty jealousy and ambition, of covered snare and open attack—a narrow field where feeling must be smothered and animosity dissembled, and give place to well-bred indifference and well-acted benevolence, precisely as all rivalry and emulation are set aside in the playground by well-conditioned children out of school.

In the exhibition of courtesy and friendship, whether felt or affected, no man is a more thorough master than a well-bred Spaniard. This is the country where

the most high-sounding and least-meaning compliment is freely permitted and approved. You are welcomed by a Spaniard, not to his, but to "your own house," for yours his house becomes the moment he gives you his name and address, though he is fully aware there is no chance whatever of your again seeing each other on this side of purgatory.

The company here at La Granja is perpetually shifting, new faces turning up, no one seems to know where from, and the greetings of friends or comrades have a warmth and heartiness nowhere else exhibited. You hear everywhere, every moment, lusty voices calling out to one another from a distance: "¡Hola! Juanitoo! Ramiritoo!" and, behold, two middle-aged cronies, to whom the caressing infantile diminutives seem hardly becoming, rush out of the various groups with every demonstration of loving eagerness, and stand face to face, the left hand of Juan taking hold of Ramiro's left, and Juan's right arm thrown over Ramiro's shoulder, patting it again and again tenderly, playfully, with the good-humoured and patronising air of a papa blessing his little scapegrace of a son.

It is the peculiar half-embrace which I described on a previous occasion. I never saw the accolade, or patting of the shoulder, going on on both sides at the same time.

With little, pleasant, but unexciting incidents of this kind, the even tenor of Spanish summer life at La Granja is varied.

The usual way of getting rid of the day consists in lying abed till between ten and eleven, coming to muster on the Palace terrace till one, going home to lunch, taking a siesta till five or six, then a drive, ride or walk down the avenue to Segovia, where a score of carriages cover with dust as many groups of nurses and children, of priests and priests' cronies, and ladies in long trailing dresses; the pedestrians seldom stretching beyond the Campo del Tomillo, an open heath where wild thyme grows, and where the enjoyment consists in sitting on rocks and watching cardboard kites, in the shape of veritable hawks or eagles, flying in the air, and driving little live birds scared and fluttering out of sight; or a little farther off to the Valsain brook, where the amusement is supplied by Newfoundland dogs plunging in the rushing stream, breasting the current, fetching sticks, and diving for stones to the great delight and gratification of their proud owners. In the evening, after dinner or supper, there is the theatre, with the Spanish play performed before a thin audience—a play told twice over, the actor's part being merely a perpetual echo to the prompter's voice.

Even with so limited a stock of the world's enjoy-

ment, the Spaniards contrive to tide over the summer; for, after all, whether in town or country, the thing they most delight in is talk, and there is plenty of room between heaven and earth at La Granja for every variety of grave or light, improving or trifling conversation. Holiday-makers here have no books, and need not any, for these good people are not much addicted to reading anywhere, and a circulating library is an unknown luxury even in Madrid. There is great kindness of manner shown to strangers, a very charming simplicity and primitiveness of life. On the very slightest introduction, acquaintance with high and low, and access to the King and all Court and Government officials, is easily obtained. Everything is open, everything safe.

We are here in the heart of Old Castile, where the meanest boor justly prides himself on his untarnished honour, and on the strength of it speaks up to and shakes hands with a stranger, no matter how high in rank, unconscious of any incongruity between his brown and callous palm and the thin taper fingers of his gloved acquaintance. One feels here, in all intercourse with the lower ranks, that respect for the people which ought to be the traveller's highest and greatest charm in any country he visits. Pure skies, gorgeous sunsets, ravishing landscapes, proud

monuments of art and antiquity, are mere accessories. One may be curious about things, but one must live with persons; and it is difficult to sympathise with men who profess they could be most happy in Spain or Italy, "were not those Spaniards and Italians so dreadfully in the way."

CHAPTER XIX.

SEGOVIA.

Antiquity of the city—Its forlorn look—Its isolation—Its monuments—Aspect of the city—Its antiquities—The aqueduct—Doubts as to its date and style—Its beauty—Its vicissitudes—What the aqueduct has outlived—What the aqueduct has seen.

THERE are not many of the old cities of Spain less frequently visited by strangers than Segovia: there are not many better deserving a visit.

It lay formerly on one of the northern main-roads—the one from Madrid to Valladolid; but neither that nor the other—from Madrid to Burgos—seemed to suit the contractors of the Great Northern Railway to France, who went far out of their way to Escorial and Avila, following thus a roundabout line, which might be shortened 150 kilomètres by tunnelling the Guadarrama Mountains and taking the straightest cut across the open Castilian plain to Burgos on the old track.

And thus it came to pass that Segovia, the capital

of a province, once the royal residence of the monarchs of Castile, with all its proud monuments and historical associations, with its fertile territory and far-famed glass, paper, and woollen manufactories, though only at the distance of 13 leagues from Madrid, is nearly a dead city, inaccessible to travellers unwilling to venture on what, in the winter months, must be allowed to be a somewhat formidable journey across snow-covered mountains.

For people ruralising at La Granja, however, Segovia lies within an easy drive of two leagues; and its cathedral is visible all along its perfectly straight and level road; an avenue flanked on either side by magnificent, though here and there dilapidated rows of Lombardy poplars.

It may seem paradoxical to say that by going from Segovia to La Granja one escapes from the noise and crowd of the country to the silence and solitude of a city. But really the fuss and bustle of the royal residence have turned what was intended by nature for a hermitage into a kind of Spa or Baden-Baden; so that a sudden transition from all its glitter and hubbub to the quiet solemnity of Segovia's empty streets, is an unspeakable relief to the senses, and attunes the mind to equally idle, perhaps, but less frivolous reflections.

The town rises, a mass of building on an isolated

rock, half hidden by the verdure lining the banks of two mountain streams—the Eresma and Clamores—which blend their waters at its feet.

Segovia boasts a grand and lofty cathedral, one of the last, most simple and stately specimens of that Gothic style of architecture, which was never so great in Spain as when it reached its last stage; which knew no period of decline, but put forth the master-works of this minster and of that of Salamanca as the notes of the swan's song by which it soothed its death-pang.

Segovia has its Alcazar of the eleventh century, now a ruin, damaged by fire, but showing, in its quaint turrets, in its massive keeps, in its vast halls and gorgeous state apartments, the vestiges of the lustre of that Castilian dynasty which had here its home, down to the days of its last and greatest Sovereign.

Segovia is an unmatched picture of the Middle Ages. You read its history on the old city walls with their eighty-three towers; in the domes and belfries of what are here called "Byzantine" churches; in the bare and blank ruins of its deserted monasteries; in the battle-mented towers of its noble mansions.

Nothing so striking as the contrast between the high open terraces of its palaces and the low flat roofs of its mean hovels; the medley of half-finished or more than half-ruined buildings; the houses propped up here and there by beams across the way; the works

begun with means out of proportion to the ends; gigantic conception often leading to puny abortive execution.

Massive iron-sheeted doors, window-bars and loopholes in the walls; the very knockers fit specimens for a museum; with the dust of long decay pervading everything, and lying already too thick and heavy to allow the doomed place a hope of recovery, or even of the indefinite prolongation of its agony.

It reminds the traveller of the aspect of the fallen cities of Italy, say of the havoc and splendour of Ferrara or Ravenna; and one of its houses—the Casa de los Picos, with a façade lined with square projecting stones, cut diamond-shape—bears some resemblance to the well-known Palazzo dei Diamanti in the first-named of those two Italian cities. The house in Segovia was the dwelling of a wealthy Jew, we are told; therefore, probably anterior to the expulsion of the Hebrew race from Spain.

Still, the great marvel of Segovia, the achievement associated from time immemorial with the city, and blazoned in its municipal arms as its cognisance, is the aqueduct.

This “bridge,” as it is called, consists of a long double line of arches thrown across the ravines of the valley of the Eresma, and forming, as it were, a triumphal arch and gate of the city, as the traveller

drives under it at the end of his journey from La Granja.

It is called a Roman building, and attributed to Trajan, the Emperor whom the Spaniards claim as their countryman; but it bears no inscription and apparently never bore any. Nor does any record or hint occur in ancient writers that can furnish a clue to the date of the building or the name of the builder.

To doubt that the aqueduct is a Roman work would be little less than heresy; yet there are some native critics who timidly, and, as it were, with bated breath, venture to suggest that at least its original design and construction may have been anterior to the Roman domination of the interior of Spain, and that it may be claimed as the achievement of those Celtiberian or other indigenous races who, like the Ligurians and Etruscans, and other older native Italian tribes, knew something about architecture before the Romans, and gave their masters some useful hints in that art in which they became so eminently proficient.

This opinion might be grounded on the fact that the Segovian aqueduct is constructed of large blocks of stone laid upon one another, Cyclopean fashion, without cement or mortar, in the style of which specimens remain in the walls of Tarragona, the huge

stones in many instances underlying the layers of imperial Roman brick masonry.

Another argument urged in support of this theory is that this aqueduct, although solid enough to have withstood the shock of fifteen centuries, is by no means a "massive building," as the guide-books call it; it has nothing of the solidity of the arches of such aqueducts as strew with their ruins the Campagna of Rome or the plain of Merida; but it is a light, airy-fairy structure, standing on very slender pillars, almost miraculously, and its wonder and beauty consist especially in this, that the architect, whoever he was, contrived to give his work just the strength he needed to answer the purpose for which it was intended, grudging even one pound's weight of material which might produce an appearance of heaviness and clumsiness.

So striking is this masterly adaptation, this perfect adequacy of the means to the end; so flimsy, fragile, and gossamer-like are the lines of this marvellous arcade, that superstition assigns to it a supernatural origin, the legend being that it was constructed in one night by the devil, enamoured of a Segovian damsel, whom he wished to save the trouble of carrying her pitcher up and down the steep banks to fetch water across the valley.

The truth is, that we are much in the dark as

to the development primitive art may have attained in ante-Roman times among races flourishing under the blissful influence of these southern climates.

They have in Segovia a so-called statue of Hercules, in a convent bearing the appellation of House of Hercules, carved, in all probability, at a remoter epoch than any that can be assigned to the aqueduct. And they have also two of those Toros de Guisando, of which Avila boasts four (of which there were sixty-three in the Peninsula in 1598, a number reduced to thirty-seven in 1820), and to which I alluded in my description of Avila in a former chapter.

The water of the Segovian aqueduct springs in the Fuenfria and runs through the Rio Frio (cold-fountain and cold-river); a pure water flowing from the Guadarama mountains over a distance of ten or twelve miles; and the aqueduct was made to go through several bends and turnings to check the impetuosity of the stream. It runs 216 feet to the first angle, 462 feet to the second, and 937 to the third, where it becomes a bridge, spanning the valley from bank to bank, and resting at the end on the rock, on which stands what is left of the battlemented walls of the city. The total length of the aqueduct is thus 1,615 feet, and consists of 320 arches, which begin single and low, but rise gradually as the ground sinks, to

maintain the level, and become double, one tier over another, as they vault over the gap of the valley, over the stream and the highway, all along the range that faces the traveller, as he approaches to and passes under it, entering the town.

The three central arches are the loftiest, and rise to a height of 102 feet. These, on the nether tier, are surmounted by three blocks of stone somewhat in the shape of steps, intended as a cornice to mark the locality of the town-gate, and over the steps, in one of the pillars of the upper tier, are scooped two niches, with a statue of the Virgin in the niche looking to the town, and in the other at the back a nondescript figure that priests call St. Sebastian, but in which the Segovians fancy they behold the effigy of the Satanic architect of the bridge.

No words and no picture could convey the impression wrought upon the traveller by the sight of this magic building.

The whole structure is of granite, light gray, as found in the quarry, but turned by age to a light pearl and purple tint, glowing like jasper in the deep blue of this semi-Alpine Castilian sky. The blocks of stone, on a near inspection, seem to have been laid upon one another clumsily and, as it were, at haphazard, some of them so daringly jetting out and hanging over as to suggest the apprehension that the whole

fabric may at any time collapse and slip down to the ground like a castle of cards. Yet the bridge has been standing, perhaps, 2,000 years, and looks intact; and the design, seen at a proper distance, is a model of ease and elegance, relying, one would say, on mere symmetry and balance for solidity.

The stones, rudely cut in large, long, square blocks, bear the holes of the iron clamps by which they were hoisted up to their places; they are worn smooth and almost round by time and storms, but are sound at the core; and at the base of the pillars, as well as at various stages up the shafts and at the turning of the arches, there are cornices of what seems to have been black marble, but now everywhere chipped and cracked and almost altogether fretted away.

The aqueduct is the only thing really living in poor dead Segovia. The necessity of securing a constant supply of better water than what flows between the ravines of the Eresma compelled the construction of this work when the place was a mighty city, and insured its preservation as the town sank year by year to its present forlorn and dilapidated condition.

The Moors, who sacked the town in 1071, pulled down thirty-five of the minor arches; but the water-course continued uninterrupted, the people contriving by wood-work to prop up the wooden trough or pipe running at the top. The dismantled arches were

restored, as far as was practicable, in the original style in 1483 by Queen Isabella the Catholic, and the aqueduct has suffered no outrage from that time. What is more properly called the bridge—*i.e.*, the double range of arches across the valley—escaped even the ravages of the Arab invasion.

There is something exalting and flattering to human pride in the contemplation of this edifice, which, like the Pantheon at Rome, is between fifteen and twenty centuries old, and yet not a ruin. One dreams of the works of men that have risen and fallen in the adjoining city, while the aqueduct has been standing and performing the humble yet vital service for which it was intended, unmoved by the joys or woes of the population to whose most pressing wants it ministered.

The ancient cathedral, begun, it is said, in the sixth century, finished in the twelfth, where councils were held and kings were crowned, used as a fortress against ruthless enemies, and so ravaged that its Holy of Holies had to be removed from its original site to the spot where the present edifice rose in 1525; the Alcazar, till 1866 a masterpiece of royal magnificence, now a mere wreck destined to moulder on the ground to the end of time; the scores of churches and convents, sanctuaries, chapels, and hermitages, crowding the streets of the town and its suburbs—some of the Lord's houses now closed from want of worshippers—some of

the fat fraternities dwindling in numbers and thinning in flesh as, if not the faith, at least the lavish charity of their patrons cooled and fainted—the fortress-palaces where proud nobles learnt valour and courtesy, then sulked and idled, and laid aside the energies and spirits which made them the bulwark and the scourge of their meaner countrymen—all that made Segovia in the Middle Ages and unmade it in modern times—had its rise and fall, its life and death, during the long period since the aqueduct first threw the shadow of its aerial arches on the skirts of the rock on which the city stands.

Mighty Castilian kings with their hosts of iron-clad warriors; the sweet and pious and thrifty Isabella on her palfrey, with her crafty Aragonese husband and her Cardinal-Minister by her side; the Imperial Charles V., her grandson; the sallow and gloomy Philip II.; the popular heroes Padilla and Juan Bravo; and, perhaps, Columbus and Cortez, with a host of minor notabilities, rode centuries after centuries under these arches. The records of great events—the long wars against the Moors, the formation of the Spanish monarchy, the extinction of the people's liberties, the expulsion of the Jews, the revolt of the *Comuneros*, the decline of the national character, the repeated French invasions, and the revindication of the country's soil from the hated foreigner—all seem

engraved on those slowly yet eternally crumbling stones piled up by the constructive genius of a man who will be for ever nameless.

Those swarms of swallows and martens which hover on the wing in clouds about the lovely fabric, the shrieks of which are almost the only sound enlivening the air in the stillness of the summer sunset, have been there—they or their progenitors—ever since those arches were first bowed. The clay of their nests, hardened by ages, has clung to those stones since they were laid ; generation after generation of these erratic birds have come back year by year from remote regions to their favourite haunts in those stones, and have found there undisturbed homes season after season.

CONCLUSION.

SPAIN AND HER GOVERNMENT.

The Spanish people—Their character—Their good qualities—Exaggerated to faults—A retrospect—Heroic Spain—Despotic Spain—Revolutionary Spain—Reactionary Spain—Discredited politicians—Difficulties of the Government—King Alfonso—Canovas del Castillo—The generals—The priests—Sagasta—Marshal Serrano—Castelar—Political demoralisation—Place-hunting—Abuse of patronage—Democracy—The Government in the hands of adventurers—The *Caciques*—The King—The monarchic principle—The Church—Spanish religion—Church and State—A compromising Government—The present situation—Its hollowness and precariousness—Symptoms of well-being—Home and foreign difficulties.

I HAVE now come to the end of my task. But before I dismiss a subject which has directly or indirectly engaged my attention for nearly a score of years, I crave permission to reconsider it in these few remaining pages, and analyse the final impression it leaves upon my mind.

It is impossible, I think, to visit this country and to dwell at any length among its inhabitants without

feeling a certain respect for them, and taking a sincere, however melancholy, interest in their well-being.

The Spaniards have been a valiant people. The traditions of high honour, of chivalrous loyalty and devotion, which distinguished them during the short but brilliant era of their ascendancy, lingered among them throughout the period of their rapid and incessant decline.

There are depths of abjection, of rudeness, of cowardice, of cringing servility, to which it is hardly possible for a Castilian to sink. A sense of personal dignity, a loftiness of bearing, an easy grace and courtesy, an attentive deference to other people's just claims and wishes, a punctilious observance of all minor social morals—characterise the whole race, and give it at least the outward polish of the most consummate civilisation.

The Spaniard is calm and undemonstrative, reserved and formal, burying his foibles and failings in the depth of his bosom, with the same fastidious care with which he hides the rents and stains of his garments under the ample folds of his cloak. He is a man of few wants, of simple habits; free from envy and covetousness, abstemious to a fault, heroic in endurance. There is no extreme to which he will not carry his self-denial in the gratification of his self-esteem.

Unfortunately the very exaggeration of these fine

qualities is apt to turn them into flaws and blemishes. Disdain of everything base and mean tends to the development of conceit and vaingloriousness. Depth of conviction degenerates into narrow obstinacy, indocility, and intolerance. Indifference to comforts and luxuries makes man unenterprising and slothful. Self-respect is often conducive to overweening self-consciousness and self-assertion. The limits between defensive or justifiable, and aggressive or intolerable pride, are easily overstepped; and it was a transcendent opinion of its own qualifications and of its neighbours' shortcomings that gave the Spanish nation that fatal inertia grounded on self-satisfied conceit, which stood in the way of its improvement, and caused it to lag behind in the race of European progress.

Enlightened Spaniards are not loth to acknowledge and even to magnify their own faults, but are perhaps too prone to lay the blame of them on their Government. They seem not to consider to what extent an identity must in all cases be established between a nation and its rulers. Not only has Spain for centuries been an unconquered country, but it is of all modern communities the one which had to win its territory inch by inch to make it its own, and to determine its frontiers by the most spontaneous, unanimous, and strenuously sustained exertions.

Having asserted their rights over their own land

by their Moorish wars, the Spaniards looked abroad for a wider field of enterprise. They fought the Old World; they subdued the New; and so exhausted their energies in deeds of war as to unfit themselves for the work of peace. They depopulated Spain in their vain efforts to colonise America. They exercised so stolid a tyranny over Italy and the Netherlands as to become incapable of freedom for themselves.

From the expulsion of the Moors to the downfall of the First Napoleon, Spain was the only guide of its own destinies. Its kings and its priests sprang from the soil; they were typical of the national idiosyncrasies. For a long time the people here showed their preference for a sovereign who showed himself "Muy Rey" and "Muy Español." And their saints and founders of monastic orders, their Dominics and Loyolas, imparted to their religious faith an earnest and savage zeal, which shocked Rome itself as too officious, excessive, and dangerous. The Spanish nation was a too willing horse; it bade its rider jump into the saddle, suffered it to rein it hard, to urge it on ruthlessly, to ride it to death.

Loyalty and devotion were the mother's milk in which the Spanish kid was smothered.

Excess, however, even in Spain, could not fail to lead to reaction. The nation rebelled against tyranny and bigotry; it stood up for its rights and

vindicated its liberties; it overthrew its ministers, banished its dynasty, proclaimed republics; it spilt its blood and exhausted its energies and resources in senseless civil wars; it condensed in a few months all the follies and repentances, the revolutions and restorations which France had spread over a lapse of as many years.

It went a long way only to be brought back to the point whence it started.

All this latter cycle of evolutions I have witnessed. I have watched the country from the outbreak of its disturbances to its return to a quiescent state. I have left the country reconciled with the reigning dynasty, rallied round the throne of its old monarchs, watching the development of its new charter, cured of fond illusions, fallen from bright aspirations, sick at heart, disgusted and despondent about many things.

To a man who will turn his attention to the relations between the Spanish people and their Government, two salient points will be especially apparent—one, that the people, schooled by all the traditions of the past, have been brought to look upon the Government—no matter what Government—as their enemy. They have learnt to fear, to hate, and, at the same time, to despise it, and wage war against it by evading its laws, and setting its authority

at naught. The other, that the best, most honourable, and, in many cases, most capable men make it a point to keep aloof from the management of public affairs, wash their hands of State matters, and, convinced of the incorrigible nature of their Government, pride themselves in wrapping their cloaks around them, to avoid contamination and make themselves no partakers of iniquity.

Nowhere, perhaps, have politics more hopelessly fallen to the condition of a trade than in democratised Spain. Nowhere else have a pack of perhaps four or five hundred *pasteleros* (piemen), as they are called, intriguers, adventurers, and shallow impostors, invaded the high places, made themselves indispensable and irrepressible as party leaders, and accustomed the country to see them share the power between them—one party rising on the other falling—with the alternative of a perpetual see-saw. Nowhere do the mass of the people witness with greater apathy all political changes. Nowhere do they more passively suffer themselves to be kicked about, right and left, like mere children's toys.

It was not by the people's act, but by a stroke of good fortune; not by the contrivance of politicians, but by a sudden freak of a few general officers, that King Alfonso XII. was called to his ancestral throne at the end of the year 1874. The restoration was hailed as a

godsend, and it was in itself a positive gain. Nor has the young King in the least disappointed the expectations that his mere presence had raised. The King is "all right;" but a sovereign can only reign. It is for the ministers to govern; and for more than four years (January, 1875, to September, 1875; then again from December, 1875, to March, 1879; and, for a third time, from December, 1879, to February, 1881) the good and evil of the ministry was summed up in the person of Canovas del Castillo; a man who, towards the end of Isabella's reign, when in disgrace, had the reputation of being "the only really able Spanish statesman living."

But Canovas came back as a State physician. He had to cure extreme evils by extreme remedies. A revolutionary era was necessarily followed by a period of reaction. The republic had held its revels: it was for the monarchy to pay the piper. Canovas' rule was wise; it was moderate and not illiberal. But the Democrats, who had been "scotched, not killed," would hear no reason. They carped at inevitable measures; they misconstrued the most upright intentions; indeed, they would not accept accomplished facts; they would not acknowledge themselves vanquished; they insisted that Republicanism should find room in a monarchy, and that an avowed republican party should have seats in a Monarchic Assembly.

The Democrats, however, would have been in themselves simply contemptible ; they had been little before their unexpected success, and were less than nothing after their ignominious defeat. And Canovas would have had nothing to fear from them had he not laboured under an original disqualification. Canovas was a civilian ; and for half a century it had become an article of faith among Spaniards, that, as the royal sceptre had, upon the repeal of the Salic Law, "sunk to a distaff" (*tombé en quenouille*), its real power should devolve on a prime minister wielding a marshal's bâton.

In their utter inability to act for themselves, the Democrats stirred up the ambition of the generals, especially of the "King-maker," Martinez Campos, who prevailed on the King first to associate him to Canovas as a Member of the Cabinet, then to dismiss Canovas and put into his place Sagasta, an astute politician, a very Proteus, who had gone through as many turnings of his coat as there had been phases in the political situation during the interregnum.

To bring Spanish politics to the very acme of absurdity, we have now (December, 1882,) seen Marshal Serrano come forth from the retirement to which his pusillanimous conduct as President of the Executive of the Republic during the catastrophe of 1874 ought for ever to have doomed him, and attempt to trip up Sagasta—that Sagasta who had been his colleague

under Prim, under King Amadeo, and more lately, during the last year of the interregnum.

The pretext put forward by Serrano in his motion was his objection to the reactionary character of the Monarchic Constitution of 1878, and his wish that it should be superseded by that of 1869.

This Constitution of 1869, sprung from the ideas prevailing at the outbreak of the revolutionary period, though intended for a monarchic state, was absurdly democratic, and, indeed, Utopian. So much so that Serrano himself, as Prime Minister of King Amadeo, in 1872, had gone up to the King and declared that it was "impossible to carry on the government unless that Constitution was abolished." And as Amadeo pleaded the oath which bound him to that charter, the Prime Minister threw up his portfolio.

And now that same Serrano steps forward as champion of that same impracticable charter, and is confident that he can govern with it. The device has not even the merit of novelty, for the Constitution of the year 1812, and that of 1854, and ever so many more, have in the same manner been used as weapons to wage an unfair war against an adversary, all of them being invariably thrown aside and forgotten when they had answered their purpose.

Serrano was soundly beaten in the Senate of which he is a member, and where his motion found

only fourteen supporters. But some of his partisans or accomplices brought the subject into the Congress of Deputies, and there the Prime Minister, Sagasta, declared, that although he could never accept the Constitution of 1869, he had no objection to a revision of the Constitution now existing—that of 1876—"on the lines" of that of 1869.

All this is mere quibbling, the common-sense version of which is on Serrano's side the intimation, "*Ôte toi de là que je m'y mette*," and Sagasta's answer: "You shan't have my place, but if you are reasonable, I will see if I can't make room for you beside me."

Such has been the upshot of ministerial crises in Spain in a hundred instances. Whatever principles may be put forward, everything resolves itself into a question of persons. And with what persons the country has to put up we may argue from the fact that after so many vicissitudes, after so many trials, after so many delusions, the alternative still lies between two such used-up politicians as Serrano and Sagasta—Serrano, who, whether at the head or tail of any Government, was never anything else but a puppet in other people's hands: Sagasta, who declared from his place in Parliament, that he did not know how to turn "*honest men*" (*hombres honrados*) to any good Government purpose!

The real truth is that there is no Constitution and

no statesman, no principle and no person, that has not been tried in Spain, and always with the same result. A modification of rule or policy, the establishment of old or new bases, the inauguration of a system, even the real preponderance of a well-defined, consistent party, are all impossibilities in that country. There can, in reality, be no Government. There is a rottenness and corruption pervading the Administration which old despotism ushered in, but which has been getting worse and worse under every form of representative government, and which every new ruler, however upright and well-meaning, not only cannot attempt to reform, but which he is, on the contrary, compelled by the exigencies of his position further to deepen and aggravate.

There are no governing classes in the country, no men fitted by birth or tradition, or prepared by long training and practice for the management of the various departments of public business. Every party, in or out of office, has its own swarms of placemen or place-hunters. There is nothing more wretchedly paid in Spain than most public offices, yet nothing more eagerly solicited, nothing more energetically scrambled for.

A Spaniard's paradise is a Government situation, as it involves almost nothing to do; and, as it yields but little lawful gain, it allows of jobbing and robbing at discretion, and with impunity. The State in Spain

has no friends. It is free to any jack-in-office to hit it hard, to fasten on its vitals, to suck its blood to the last drop.

This is not because the Spaniards, as a nation, are a more dishonest set of men than their neighbours. Although the leading politicians are mostly mere adventurers, it will happen now and then that high-minded and honourable individuals are called to wield the supreme power. But the country is ever ready to ostracise its best men. It follows the example of France till it runs mad with democracy, with "liberty, equality, and fraternity," and "the beauties of universal suffrage." It is confident that in any division of public opinion, all sense and character, all intellectual and moral worth, must be ranged on the side of a numerical majority. And this might be true if numbers could be made to think and act for themselves; but in Spain the multitude are an inert mass, never stirring except upon extraneous impulse, more inclined to listen to the noisiest than to the wisest or safest advisers. It is not from their own instinct, or with any purpose of their own, that men are brought to exercise their rights or fulfil their duties. Universal suffrage is nowhere a more patent delusion than in Spain. With every extension of the suffrage there has been a falling off in the attendance of voters at the polls. It is the especial boast of Sagasta that he never had any

doubt as to the results of any election of which he held the threads at the Home Office; and of the Chamber, springing from such sources, he was always equally sure. There was no man worth buying there who had not his price; no newspaper in the country that could not be intimidated when it was not worth bribing.

Sagasta is convinced that public conscience is not amenable to the rules that determine right and wrong in private conduct; that a statesman must take men as he finds them, and sacrifice principle to party. He knows how ignorant, how indolent and supine a race of men it is he has to deal with; how absolutely politics in his country are a matter of persons; how frequently and unblushingly parties change ideas; how causelessly they fall out and are reconciled; and what egregious misnomers are the various designations with which they distinguish themselves. Surely no better proof could be adduced of the hollowness of the basis on which Constitutionalism rests in Spain, than the fact that in all the convulsions the country has gone through, from the fall of the Bourbon dynasty to the present moment, Sagasta should have always fallen on his feet, that he should at all times and under all forms of government, have been, as he is now, the man of the situation.

Deprived of all other means of rallying a knot

of trusty partisans about him, an aspiring politician bids for support by boundless promises of favour and patronage. He comes into power weighted by manifold engagements, and employs in fulfilling or in evading them all the time and the energies which should be devoted to the improvement of the public service. Placed at the head of what is nominally a parliamentary, but in reality a bureaucratic, Government, he organises his *personnel* so as to turn it almost exclusively into an electioneering machinery. Besides the civil governors or prefects, and the military commanders, his immediate dependants and creatures, he has at his command, in every town and province, men, often of the very worst character, who place themselves at his disposal, strengthen him to the full extent of their local ascendancy, manipulate for him municipal, provincial, and general elections, and make themselves responsible for their results; but in return claim the exercise of unbounded absolute authority, have a finger in every official appointment, like so many Cosmos or Pieros de Medici ruling the rulers of their own petty community, and constituting an undefined yet paramount power in their own fraction of the State.

These petty local despots, designated as *Caciques*, are neither more nor less than a Government *Camorra*, by turns seconding or thwarting, countenancing or

controlling the Administration, sharing its plunder and aggravating its disorders and abuses.

His always uncertain, but usually short and precarious, tenure of office, and the war waged against him by the Opposition, never allows a Spanish minister leisure or calmness for the slightest attempt at sweeping the Augean stable of the public service, or even at preventing the accumulation of its foulness and offensiveness. The atmosphere of all State departments is so deeply tainted that it becomes an impossibility for any man who breathes it not to become infected with it, and to get so used to it as to lose all sense of wholesome freshness and purity.

With whatever good intentions or honourable precedents a statesman may reach the goal of his ambition, he is no sooner in office than despair of using it to good purposes seizes him, and, unless he withdraws from it in time, he can hardly help being whirled along with the current, and contributing his own share to the evils which he so emphatically denounced, and of which he so confidently undertook the cure. In so hopeless a state of things it can be no wonder if outsiders lose all interest in the political game and give it up to professional blacklegs.

From all I have said it seems natural to conclude that the corruption which had invaded every branch

of the social edifice in Spain at the close of Isabella's reign has not been materially affected by the ordeal through which the country has passed during fifteen years of revolution and reaction. Of all the bases on which social order should rest only one has as yet been laid, and that is Royalty as represented by Alfonso XII. But even that is mere matter of person, not principle; for the monarchic corner-stone can scarcely be considered at rest where deputies still sit in Parliament as declared Republicans, either refusing to take the oath of allegiance or professing themselves unshackled by it, and reserving their freedom of action; one of them, Castelar, recently proclaiming that, "Liberty and Monarchy cannot co-exist."

But even more difficult than the reconstruction of the State seems to be in Spain the reorganisation of the Church. The Spaniards are, as they have always been, Roman Catholics, *i.e.*, believers who build their convictions on authority, and allow themselves no inquiry into what they call sacred things. "He who begins to reason," they think, "is lost. And there is nothing but force that can control reason. Remove that force, do away with the Inquisition and religious disabilities, and you will have, with the use, also the abuse of reason. Allow an inch for doubt, and there will follow an ell of scepticism."

Hence it is that in Spain, as in other Latin countries, Liberalism and Infidelity have always been considered synonymous. As people have never been allowed, so they never learnt, to analyse their religious thoughts and feelings. They had swallowed their creed in the lump, and in the lump they rejected it. There can be no true faith without that conviction that rests on examination; but neither can there be, on any other terms, true belief. A Spaniard, a Frenchman, or an Italian is merely the *fanfaron* of an Infidelity for which he can give no account. The French Communists who shot an archbishop were men who dared not die without a priest.

The Spanish Republicans were never guilty of the atrocities of their French brethren; but they carried their blind hatred of the priests as far as they could venture. They tore down the papal arms from the Nuncio's door; compelled that prelate to fly for his life; denounced the Concordat of 1850; abolished nunneries; confiscated Church property; and all but starved the parish clergy, as well as the members of religious houses to whom pensions were assigned as indemnity for the houses and lands taken from them.

On the other hand, though they had no sympathy with Protestantism, they not only tolerated, but encouraged, the establishment of Dissenting chapels and schools,

and promoted well-known Freethinkers to high places in their educational establishments.

It was equally difficult for the King's Ministers at the Restoration, either to seem to sanction these measures, or to undo them. It was vain for them to hope to reconstruct the old fabric of the Spanish Church on its original plan, and there was no one to furnish a plausible new design.

The first instinct prompted the Government to recall the Pontifical Nuncio, who made his triumphant entrance into Madrid in May, 1875. But what amount of reaction did not this recall of the Nuncio imply? The Nuncio was virtually the head of the Church in Spain; the most important home functionary, as well as the highest foreign representative; and it was in this double capacity that he received his handsome stipend; for His Holiness was the only potentate who kept a diplomatic agent accredited to Spain at Spain's own expense, and Spain the only country willing to pay the salary of a foreign envoy.

The Nuncio, of course, was sure to look forward to the reversal of all the acts of the revolutionary Government affecting the interests of the Church. He would naturally demand the reinstalment of a privileged ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the complete payment of all the arrears due to the clergy, the strict observance of

the Concordat of 1850, and, in short, a return to the darkest days of Isabella's reign.

The realisation of such a programme was, on many points, an impossibility. Absolute unity of faith and worship was incompatible with that freedom of conscience which the King's Government was bound, at least nominally, to allow. The indemnity to the clergy for the spoliation they had endured for the last seven years would have involved the utter exhaustion of an already more than half-bankrupt treasury. The Concordat and the ecclesiastical courts could not be reimposed upon the country without the sanction of the legislative powers which the King's Government had solemnly engaged to re-constitute; and the ascendancy of ecclesiastical over civil authority could not fail to clash with those popular liberties which in Spain, as in France, were looked upon as the "legitimate conquests of the Revolution."

Under such circumstances the King's Government could only venture on half-measures and follow a policy of compromise. It established the State religion, but admitted the principle of freedom of conscience. It admitted freedom of conscience, but limited freedom of worship. It did not give back the universities to Jesuit rule, but imprisoned and banished the pro-

fessors who had banished the Jesuits. Finally, it drew up and carried through the Cortes the Constitution of 1876, the same against which that doughty champion, Serrano, lately entered the lists; as if that Constitution were either better or worse than any other; as if any Constitution in Spain could ever be of greater value than the rag of paper on which it is written; as if a Cortes had ever been anything better than a spouting club, wasting in vain academical discussions the time that should be devoted to legislation; as if a popular election were aught else than a mockery and hocus-pocus.

Thus does Spain, after seven years of democratic revolution and seven of monarchic restoration, find herself very much in the same conditions as she was when I first visited the country in 1865. The moral, as well as the legal, basis of a well-regulated society is missing. Both King and God equally exist on sufferance. There are no permanent, unassailable institutions; no positive rule of right or wrong, nothing sacred. What one faction has made another faction can unmake. The *pronunciamiento* of Cadiz turned out a Queen; that of Murviedro, or Sagunto, brought back a King. And Serrano might have had little difficulty, the other day, in turning out Sagasta, if he had been bold enough to attempt to carry his point,

the good or harm she chooses. All that does not yet constitute her a great Power; it does not win her a place in European councils; it does not entitle her to sign her name to important international treaties; it reminds her too rudely of the chain of untoward events which have sunk her to the rank of a second-rate State.

Spain frets against this humiliation, and is not to be comforted by the thought that her neutrality, a privilege for which she is indebted to her geographic position, implies also the greatest of blessings, universal goodwill and immunity from danger.

And there is the Union Jack still waving on the Rock of Gibraltar: and the tobacco contraband carried on through the lines at St. Roque: and the English wine duties favouring France at the expense of the Peninsula: and France annexing Tunis, and England invading Egypt: and Europe looking on and accepting accomplished facts: and Spain—nowhere!

Yet Spain is a great nation. She has colonies across the main; a world-wide trade; material interests to protect; her "legitimate influence" to exercise and extend. Why should she not have her say about the Eastern Question?—about the Suez Canal?

These are sore grievances that seemed to be forgotten, and lay dormant so long as Spain had her

home troubles to contend with. They are breaking out afresh now, when the country is allowed to breathe, when she might begin to hope for rest and leisure to bind up her wounds and set her house in order.

THE END.

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